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American & British
POETRY
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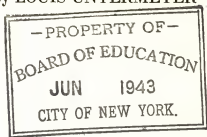
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The New
MODERN
American & British
POETRY

EDITED with suggestions for study and
appreciation by LOUIS UNTERMEYER



1941

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FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This collection is a condensation of *Modern American Poetry* and *Modern British Poetry*. It conforms to the latest editions of those two volumes and also contains poems, biographical, and bibliographical matter not to be found in either compilation. Originally prepared in 1922, this volume was amplified in 1923 and 1928, but the present revision is more comprehensive as well as more critical.

To keep it a living record of our times some of the poets represented in the preceding editions have been omitted in favor of newer and more representative poets. The prefaces have been extended and brought sharply up to date. Greater emphasis has been placed on the outstanding poets of the present not only by expanding the introductory notes but by enlarging the groups of their poems. The rewritten prose paragraphs tell more about the poets, furnish interpretative backgrounds, and help "explain" many of the poems. Perhaps the greatest departure toward simplification is the material in the back of the volume. Here, in a series of Suggestions for Study, the preceding poetry is re-grouped, new verse is added, helpful guides are supplied, and the body of the work is freshly presented from many new angles.

Thus the collection represents a panorama of the present with a fairly wide background of the immediate past, a panorama in which the major poets of the period occupy the foreground, but in which the valuable lesser figures may readily be seen and studied.

The term "modern" should not be taken to mean merely contemporaneous scenes. In this volume it applies not only to the living authors, but to those pioneers and forces which have made possible the present innovators. Difficult though it is to draw a sharp line between eras, it is necessary to determine upon a point of division, even an arbitrary one. In this instance the task is made somewhat simpler by the

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emergence of a new spirit in America with the appearance of Walt Whitman and by a new "tone" in English verse toward the close of the Victoria era.

The chronological arrangement reflects the changes in poetic taste, mirrors the thought of the times, and traces the rise and fall of various schools and tendencies, as well as their influences. In the American section the dividing line has been moved back more than a century to include Walt Whitman, a poet born as early as 1819, a poet whose influence is greater now than it was during his lifetime. In the British section the boundary has been fixed a few years later in order to include Christina Rossetti, who anticipated the direct speech and straightforward accents adopted by her many followers.

Whitman, accompanied by Emily Dickinson, and Christina Rossetti, succeeded by Thomas Hardy, gave rise to unsuspected poetic forces on both sides of the Atlantic. They released new energies — free in expression, keen in awareness, broad in sympathy, and unhampered in choice of subject — energies to which two nations were quick to respond. So broad was their varied appeal that they broke down traditions everywhere; theirs was the spirit which widens the earth and enlarges horizons. Centers of culture changed; it was no longer necessary for an artist to live in New York, Boston, or London. Today the creative impulse is international. The native note in every art has been strengthened and solidified; there is scarcely a state, hardly a county, which cannot boast of its local laureate.

The paragraphs preceding the poems are intended to support and amplify this geographical range. It is instructive as well as interesting to see what effect, if any, climate and conditions exert on the creator's expression: how much the gaunt and granite hills of New Hampshire manifest themselves in the New England soliloquies of Edwin Arlington Robinson and Robert Frost, how the noisy energy of the Middle West booms and rattles through the high-pitched syllables of Vachel Lindsay, and how the prairie silences are given voice in the words of Carl Sandburg. The notes, with their brief critical as well as biographical and bibliographical data,

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have also been prepared on the theory that poet and person have a definite relation to each other and the enjoyment of the one is enhanced by an acquaintance with the other.

While emphasis has been placed upon the contribution of living writers, little stress has been laid upon the controversial subject of form. It is the matter which concerns us more than the manner. *Vers libre*, that bugaboo of many critics, has produced a quantity of trivial and tiresome exhibitions. But so, the *vers librist*s might well reply, has the sonnet. Any form, in the hands of the genuine artist, not only justifies but dignifies itself. Free verse (a misnomer, by the bye, for free verse instead of being "free" obeys certain laws of rhythm, balance, and cadence) is capable of many effects impossible of achievement in a strict, metrical pattern. Nor is free verse as one-dimensional as is often charged. It can be as vigorous as the unrhymed "voluntaries" of Henley or as delicately chiselled as of H. D.'s firm lines. We find it in various tones and textures: hugely rising and falling in the tidal rhythms of Walt Whitman, rough-hewn in the gnarled utterance of Carl Sandburg, brilliantly glazed in the enamelled pictures of Amy Lowell, biblical in the sonorous strophes of James Oppenheim.

The latest tendency indicates a return to classic form and strictly patterned verse. Controversies are no longer waged over *vers libre*; it is now considered merely one feature of modern poetry. Free verse emphasizes the inclusiveness of contemporary art, and it continues to exert an influence in favor of flexibility. The modern poet, however, is not committed to any one form; he is eagerly experimental; he employs old forms and new departures with equal interest.

There is this difference between latter-day American and British poets. Modern British verse is smoother, more matured and molded by centuries of literature. American poetry is sharper, more vigorously experimental, with youth's occasional — and natural — crudities. Where the English product is formulated, precise and (in spite of a few fluctuations) true to its past, the American expression (being the reflection of partly indigenous and largely unassimilated ideas and races) is characteristically uncoördinated. English

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poetry may be compared to a broad and luxuriating river with a series of tributaries contributing to the now thinning, now widening channel. American poetry might be described as a sudden rush of unconnected mountain torrents, valley streams, and city sluices. Instead of one placidly moving body, there are a dozen rushing currents.

There have been included in both sections not only the often quoted poems by those poets accepted as outstanding figures, but examples of less familiar verses by little known singers who are also representative of their age. The same spirit has impelled the reprinting of a liberal portion of that species which stands midway between light verse and authentic poetry. The Eugene Fields, the J. W. Rileys, may not occupy the same high plane as the Masfelds, the Housmans, and the Frosts, but there are few people who will not be attracted to them and thus be drawn on to deeper notes and larger themes. In the dialect verses of Paul Laurence Dunbar and T. A. Daly there is dignity beneath the humor; their broken syllables reveal the melting pot which America has become.

With the realization that this gathering is not so much a complete summary as an introduction to modern poetry, it is hoped that the collection will move the reader to a closer inspection of the poets included. The purpose of an anthology must be to rouse and stimulate an interest, not merely to satisfy a curiosity. Such, at least, is the hope and aim of one editor.



For help as well as secretarial work during the preparation of the manuscript the editor is grateful to his wife, Esther Antin Untermeyer, and for further stimulating suggestions he is under obligations to William H. Cunningham, Jamaica Plain High School, Boston, Massachusetts, and Miss Helen L. Hall, head of the English department, Alexander Hamilton High School, Brooklyn, New York. For several questions in the Suggestions for Study (first printed in the 1923 edition) he is indebted to Olive Ely Hart. For poems

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MODERN AMERICAN POETRY



PREFACE

Limiting a cultural expanse is far more difficult than fixing a geographical boundary. In spite of the hazards every editor must attempt to define the extent of his territory. In the case of modern American poetry the ground to be covered is widespread, rich, and varied, but at least one of its borders may be determined with some certainty. It may be said that the rebirth of American literature dates from the end of the Civil War and the publication of the third enlarged edition of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. The outlines are fairly clear; it may be interesting to retrace them.

END OF THE CIVIL WAR

The Civil War inspired volumes of military, religious, and patriotic verse without adding more than four or five memorable pieces to the anthologies. Its end marked the end of an epoch, political, social, and literary. The arts declined; the New England group began to disintegrate; the poets had overstrained and outsung themselves. Unable to respond to the new forces of nationalism and reconstruction, the Brahmins (that famous group of intellectuals) withdrew into their libraries. Such poets as Bryant, Longfellow, Taylor, turned their eyes away from the native scene, rhapsodized endlessly about Europe, echoed the "parlor poetry" of England, or left creative writing altogether. "They had been borne into an era in which they had no part," writes Fred Lewis Pattee (*A History of American Literature Since 1870*), "and they contented themselves with reëchoings of the old music." For them poetry ceased to be a reflection of actuality, "an extension of experience."

Suddenly the break came. America developed a national consciousness; the West discovered itself, and the East discovered the West. Grudgingly at first, the aristocratic leaders

made way for a new expression; crude, jangling, vigorously democratic. The old order was changing with a vengeance. All the preceding writers — poets like Emerson, Lowell, Longfellow, Taylor, Holmes — were products of the New England colleges, typically "Boston gentlemen of the early Renaissance." To them the new men must have seemed like a regiment recruited from the ranks of vulgarity. Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, Bret Harte, John Hay, Joaquin Miller, James Whitcomb Riley — these were men who had graduated from the farm, the frontier, the mine, the pilothouse, the printer's shop! For a while, the movement seemed of little consequence; the sharp impact of Whitman and the Westerners was averted. The poets of the transition ignored the surge of a national expression. They were even successful in holding it back. But it was gathering force.

THE "POST-MORTEM" PERIOD

The nineteenth century, up to its last quarter, had been a period of new vistas and revolts: a period of protest and iconoclasm — the era of Shelley and Byron, the prophets of "liberty, equality and fraternity." It left no immediate heirs. In England, its successors by default were the lesser Victorians. In America, the intensity of men like Emerson and Whittier gave way to the pale romanticism and polite banter of the transition, or what might better be called the "post-mortem," poets. "Much of our poetry," Thoreau wrote, "has the very best manners, but no character." These interim lyrists were frankly the singers of an indefinite reaction, digging among the bones of a long-dead past. They did not write poetry, they echoed it. As in most periods of national unconcern, the artists turned from life altogether, preoccupying themselves with the by-products of art: with elaborate and artificial conceits, with facile ideas rather than fundamental ideals.

Bayard Taylor, Richard Henry Stoddard, and Thomas Bailey Aldrich tried to escape a reality they could not express and did not wish to understand, fled to a more congenial realm of fantasy. They took the easiest routes to a prim and

academic Arcadia, to a cloying and devitalized Orient, to a mildly "reconstructed" Greece.

WALT WHITMAN

Whitman, who was to influence future generations profoundly in Europe as well as in America, had already appeared. The third edition of that stupendous volume, *Leaves of Grass*, had been printed in 1860. Almost immediately after, the publisher failed and the book passed out of public notice. But private scrutiny was keen. In 1865 a petty official discovered that Whitman was the author of the "notorious" *Leaves of Grass*, and, in spite of Whitman's sacrifice in nursing hundreds of wounded soldiers, in spite of his many past services and his present poverty, the offending poet was dismissed from his clerkship in the Department of the Interior at Washington, D. C. Other reverses followed rapidly. But Whitman, broken in health, lived to see not only a seventh edition of his work published in 1881, but a complete collection printed in his seventy-third year (1892) in which the twelve poems of the experimental first edition had grown to nearly four hundred.

The influence of Whitman can scarcely be overestimated. It has touched every shore of letters, quickened every current of contemporary art. Whitman has been praised as a prophet, as a pioneer, as a rebel, as a fiery humanist in America, in England, and throughout Europe.

Nor was it only in the matter of form that Whitman became a poetic emancipator. He led the way toward a wider aspect of democracy; he took his readers out of dim and musty libraries into the coarse sunlight and the common air. He was, as Burroughs wrote, preëminently the poet of vista; his work had the power "to open doors and windows, to let down bars rather than to put them up, to dissolve forms, to escape narrow boundaries, to plant the reader on a hill rather than in a corner." Whitman could do this because, first of all, he believed implicitly in life — in its physical as well as its spiritual manifestations; he sought to grasp existence as a whole, not rejecting the things that, to other minds,

had seemed trivial or tawdry. The cosmic and the commonplace were synonymous to him; he declared he was part of elemental, primitive things and constantly identified himself with them. His long poem "Song of Myself" is a magnificent example of his revelation of the wonder of everyday, especially in the lines beginning:

I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journeywork of the stars.

It is his large naturalism, an affection for all that is homely and of the soil, that sets Whitman apart from his fellow craftsmen as our first distinctively American poet. This blend of familiarity and grandeur animates all his work. It swings with tremendous vigor through "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"; it sharpens the sturdy rhythms (and occasional rhymes) of the "Song of the Broad-Ax"; it beats sonorously through "Drum-Taps"; it whispers immortally through the "Memories of President Lincoln" (particularly that magnificent elegy "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd"); it quickens the "Song of the Open Road" with what Tennyson called "the glory of going on," and lifts with a biblical solemnity "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking."

The final estimate of Whitman's work is yet to be written. Whitman's universality — and his inconsistencies — have defeated his commentators. To the craftsmen, Whitman's chief contribution was his form; hailing him as the father of the free verse movement, they placed their emphasis on his flexible sonority, his orchestral *timbre*, his piling up of details into a symphonic structure. To the philosophers, he was the first of modern prophets; a mystic with a startling sense of democracy. To the psychologist, he was the most revealing of autobiographers; "whoever touches this book, touches a man," he wrote. To the lay reader, he was a protagonist of "the divine average." Celebrating himself — "sane and sensual to the core" — he celebrated humanity.

But it is Whitman's spirit, not his technique nor his subject-matter, which assures him permanence. It is the broad and resistless affirmation which quickens everything he wrote and which so profoundly affected the spirit (if not the

letter) of subsequent writing. It is the quick translation of the commonplace, the glorification of neglected beauties in the running blackberry, and the miracles to be seen in a mouse and a grain of sand.

EMILY DICKINSON

Contemporary with Whitman, though, as far as the records show, utterly unaware of him, that strange phenomenon, Emily Dickinson, lived and wrote her curious poetry. Only four of the poems now famous were published during her lifetime; she cared nothing for a public, less for publicity. It was not until forty years after her death that she was recognized as one of the most original of American poets and, in some ways, the most remarkable woman poet since Sappho. Her centenary, occurring in 1930, the same year as Christina Rossetti's, was signaled by salvos of appreciation and comparisons with the Englishwoman born five days earlier than her Amherst contemporary. Both poets were born in 1830; both were strongly influenced by their fathers. Both were, in spite of every difference, puritan "beyond the blood." Both made "the great abnegation" — Christina because she could not face marriage, Emily because, it is assumed, the man she loved was married and she could face misery without him better than social tragedy with him. Here the personal similarities end. The poetic likenesses are more remote. The two poets would have been the first to repudiate any bond. Emily Dickinson would have been impatient with the round rhetoric of Christina Rossetti; much that the American wrote would have seemed reprehensible and, oftener than not, incomprehensible to the Englishwoman.

Rumor to the contrary, there was nothing nun-like about Emily Dickinson. If the episodes of her childhood (*vide the Life and Letters*) were not sufficient to prove it, the poetry is; the freedom of her spirit manifests itself in the audacity of her images, the wild leap of her epithets, the candor which extends from irreverent mischief to divine challenge. Sometimes indirect and full of remote allusions, sometimes so

concentrated as to be cryptic, hers is a poetry of continual surprise. Metaphors turned to epigrams, and playfulness and passion are merged in pure thought.

Could anyone have failed to recognize this revelation at the outset? One supposes a few tense quatrains, a dozen arresting syllables must have been sufficient to reveal the definiteness of her genius. "The authorities" disdained or forgot her. As late as 1914 *The New International Encyclopaedia* dismissed her life and work in ten lines, concluding "In thought her introspective lyrics are striking but are deficient in form." *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* seemed even less aware of her existence until 1926; the thirteenth edition contained only a mention, a cross-reference by way of comparison; her name did not appear in the Index. Yet her *Poems (First Series)* had appeared as early as 1890, and two subsequent collections had been published before 1896. In these volumes—as well as in *The Single Hound* (1915) and *Further Poems* (1929)—Emily Dickinson anticipated not only her avowed disciples but a score of poets unaware of her influence.

Thus Emily Dickinson became a puzzle. Biographers supplied fresh confusions and misleading clues in a mistaken zeal for detection. As in life, the poet escaped them all. Much of her problem remains in the realm of the mysterious. She imitated no other poet; her very "roughnesses" were individual. Time and again she skipped the expected rhyme, twisted the easy phrase, and put her indubitable mark on every line she wrote. Unlike any other poetry, her work is unique; her influence, negligible at first, is now incalculable.

THE AWAKENING OF THE WEST

By 1870 the public had been surfeited with sugared conceits and fine-spun delicacies. Whitman had exposed the overrefinements of the period, but comparatively few had listened. Yet an instinctive distaste for affectations had been growing, and when the West began to express itself in the raw accents of Mark Twain and Bret Harte, people turned

to them with enthusiasm and relief. Mark Twain, a humorous prose Whitman, revealed the Mississippi and the vast mid-West; Bret Harte, beginning a new American fiction, ushered in the wild humor and poetry of California. It is still a question whether Bret Harte or John Hay first discovered the literary importance of Pike County narratives. Twain was positive that Hay was the pioneer; documentary evidence points to Harte. But it is indisputable that Harte developed the possibilities of his background, whereas Hay, after a few brilliant ballads, reverted to his early poetic ideals and turned to the production of polished and undistinguished verse.

To the loose swagger of the West, two other men added their diverse contributions. Edward Rowland Sill, cut short just as his work was gaining headway and strength, brought to it a gentle radicalism; Joaquin Miller, rushing to the other extreme, theatricalized and exaggerated all he touched. He shouted platitudes at the top of his voice. His lines boomed with the pomposity of a brass band; floods, fires, hurricanes, Amazonian women, extravagantly blazing sunsets, the thunder of a herd of buffaloes — all were unmercifully piled upon each other. And yet Miller's poetry occasionally captured the grandeur of his surroundings, the spread of the Sierras, the energy of the Western world.

REACTION AND REVOLT IN THE '90S

The reaction set in at the beginning of the last decade of the nineteenth century. The passionate urge had spent itself, and in its place there remained nothing but imitation, the dumb-show of poetry. The poetasters wrote verse that patently echoed their literary loves. "In 1890," writes Percy H. Boynton, "the poetry-reading world was chiefly conscious of the passing of its leading singers for the last half-century. It was a period when they were recalling Emerson's 'Terminus' and Longfellow's 'Ultima Thule,' Whittier's 'A Lifetime,' Tennyson's 'Crossing the Bar,' and Browning's 'Asolando.'" The poetry of this period is dead because it is detached from the actual world. But those who regarded

poetry as a mere indoor exercise were not to rule unchallenged. Restlessness was in the air and revolt openly declared itself with the publication of *Songs from Vagabondia* (1894). No one could have been more surprised at the tremendous popularity of these care-free celebrations (the first of the collections went rapidly through seven editions) than the young authors, Richard Hovey and Bliss Carman. For theirs was a revolt without a program, a headlong flight to escape — what? In the very first poem, Hovey voiced their manifesto:

Off with the fetters
That chafe and restrain!
Off with the chain!
Here Art and Letters,
Music and Wine
Blithely combine.
Here are the Indies,
Here we are free —
Free as the wind is,
Free as the sea!

It was a challenging impulse, and the insurgence triumphed. It was the heartiness, the gypsy jollity, the rush of high spirits that conquered. Readers of the *Vagabondia* books were swept along by their speed faster than by their philosophy.

The enthusiastic acceptance of these new apostles of outdoor vigor was, however, not as much of an accident as it seemed. On one side (the world of art) the public was wearied by barren meditations set to tinkling music; on the other (the world of action) it was faced by a staggering growth of materialism which it feared. Hovey, Carman, and their imitators offered a swift way out. But it was neither an effectual nor a permanent escape. The war with Spain, the industrial turmoil, the growth of social consciousness and new ideas of responsibility made America look for fresh valuations. Hovey began to go deeper into himself and his age; in the mid-West, William Vaughn Moody grappled with the problems of his times only to have his work cut

short by death in 1910. In the main, it was another interval — two decades of appraisal and expectancy, of pause and preparation.

INTERIM—1890-1912

This interval of about twenty years was notable for its effort to treat the spirit of the times with a cheerful evasiveness. Its most representative craftsmen were, with four exceptions, the writers of light verse. These four exceptions were Richard Hovey, Bliss Carman, William Vaughn Moody and Edwin Markham.

Moody's power was the greatest, although it never rose above its potentialities. In "An Ode in Time of Hesitation," he protested against turning the "new-world victories into gain" and painted American idealism on an idealistic canvas. In "On a Soldier Fallen in the Philippines," a dirge wrenched from the depths of his nature, Moody cried out against our own imperialists. It was the fulfillment of this earlier poem which found its climax in the lengthy "Ode," with such lines as:

Was it for this our fathers kept the law?
This crown shall crown their struggle and their ruth?
Are we the eagle nation Milton saw
Mewing its mighty youth? . . .
. . . O ye who lead
Take heed!
Blindness we may forgive, but baseness we will smite.

Early in 1899, the name of Edwin Markham flashed across the land when, out of San Francisco, came the challenge of "The Man with the Hoe." This poem, which was once called "the battle-cry of the next thousand years," caught up the passion for social justice in poetry. Markham intensified the unrest that was in the air; in the figure of one man with a hoe, he drew a picture of men in the mines, men in the sweatshop, men working without joy, without hope. To social consciousness he added social conscience. In a ringing blank verse, Markham distilled the ferment of the period.

RENAISSANCE—1913

Suddenly "the new poetry" burst upon the country with unexpected vigor and extraordinary variety. October, 1912, saw the first issue of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, a monthly that was to introduce the work of hitherto unknown poets, schools, and "movements." The magazine came at the very moment of the breaking of the storm. Flashes and rumblings had already been troubling the literary heavens; a few months later came the deluge! For four years the skies continued to discharge such strange and surprisingly different phenomena as Ezra Pound's *Canzoni* (1912), Vachel Lindsay's *General William Booth Enters into Heaven* (1913), James Oppenheim's *Songs for the New Age* (1914), the first anthology of *The Imagists* (1914), Amy Lowell's *Sword Blades and Poppy Seed* (1914), Robert Frost's *North of Boston* (1914), Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology* (1915), Conrad Aiken's *Turns and Movies* (1916), Edwin Arlington Robinson's *The Man Against the Sky* (1916), Carl Sandburg's *Chicago Poems* (1916), and Robinson Jeffers' *Californians* (1916). By 1917, this new poetry was ranked as "America's first national art." People who never before had read verse, found they could not only read but relish it. They discovered that for the enjoyment of poetry it was no longer necessary to have a dictionary of rare words and classical references; they were not required to be acquainted with Latin legendry and the minor love-affairs of the Greek divinities. The new work spoke to them in their own language. It was not only closer to their soil but nearer to their souls.

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

One reason why the new poetry achieved so sudden a success was its freedom from the traditionally stilted "poetic diction." Revolting strongly against the assumption that poetry must have a special vocabulary of its own, the poets of the new era spoke in the oldest and most stirring tongue; they used a language that was the language of the people.

In the tones of ordinary speech they rediscovered the strength, the dignity of the commonplace.

Edwin Arlington Robinson had already been employing the sharp epithet, the direct tone and clarifying utterance which was to become part of the present technique. As early as 1897, in *The Children of the Night*, Robinson anticipated the brief characterizations and etched outlines of Masters' *Spoon River Anthology*; he stressed the psychological element with artistry and sureness of touch. His sympathetic studies of men whose lives were, from a worldly standpoint, failures were a sharp reaction to the current high valuation on financial achievements, ruthless efficiency, and success at any cost. Ahead of his period, Robinson had to wait until 1916, when a public prepared for him by the awakened interest in native poetry discovered *The Man Against the Sky*. After that, his audience increased steadily. His Arthurian legends replaced Tennyson's, *Tristram* (1927), achieving a greater response than most successful novels. *Cavender's House* (1929), although a difficult and lengthy monologue, solidified his position; the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry was thrice awarded to him; and there was no longer any doubt as to the importance of his contribution to American literature. Death in 1935 found him at the peak of fame.

EDGAR LEE MASTERS

Masters' most famous book still ranks as a landmark. In it, Masters made a composite of the small towns of the mid-West with a background unmistakably local and with implications that are universal. This amazing volume, in its curiosity and comprehensiveness, laid open a broad cross-section of whole communities. Beneath its tales and dramas, its condensation of grocery-store gossip, *Spoon River Anthology* was a great part of America in microcosm; it prepared the way for Sinclair Lewis' *Main Street* and the critical fiction of small-town life.

The success of the volume was sensational. In a few months, it went into edition after edition. Perhaps most readers passed over the larger issues (Masters' revelation of

the sordid cheats and hypocrisies) intent on seeing their neighbors pitilessly exposed. Yet had Masters dwelt only on the drab disillusion of the village, had he (as he was constantly in danger of doing) overemphasized the morbid episodes, he would have left only a spectacular and poorly balanced work. But the book ascends to a definite exaltation and ends on a plane of half-victorious idealism. Native to its roots, it is stark, unflinching, unforgettable.

ROBERT FROST

The same year that brought forth *Spoon River Anthology* saw the American edition of Frost's *North of Boston*. It was evident at once that the true recorder of New England and a great American poet had arrived. Frost was as native as the lonely farmhouses, the dusty blueberries, the isolated people, the dried-up brooks and mountain intervals that he described. Loving, above everything else, the beauty of the fact, he shared, with Robinson and Masters, the determination to tell not merely the actual but the factual truth. But Frost, a less disillusioned though a more saddened poet, wore his realism with a difference. Where Robinson was definite, Frost diverged, going roundabout and, in his speculative wandering, covering a wider territory of thought. Where Masters was violent and hotly scornful, Frost was reticent and quietly sympathetic. Where Masters wrote *about* his characters, Frost was *of* his people.

North of Boston was well described by the poet's own subtitle: "a book of people." In it one not only sees a countryside of people living out the intricate pattern of their lives, one catches them thinking out loud, one can hear the very tones of their voices. Here we have speech so arranged and translated that the speaker is heard on the printed page; any reader will be led by the kind and color of these words into reproducing the changing accents in which they are supposed to be uttered. It is this insistence that "all poetry is the reproduction of the tones of actual speech" which gives these poems, as well as the later lyrics, a quickly communicated emotional appeal. It endows them with the deepest power of which words are capable — the power to transmit

significant sounds. These sounds, let in from the vernacular, are full of a robust, creative energy.

Frost was by no means the dark naturalist that some of his critics suspected. Behind the mask of "grimness" which many critics fastened upon him, there is a continual elfin pucker; a whimsical smile, a half-disclosed raillery glints beneath his most somber monologues. The later *New Hampshire* (1923) and *West-Running Brook* (1928) proved his "other side"; Frost's lyrics are no less personal for being philosophical. His greatness is not only due to his self-limited choice of material; Frost's concrete facts are symbols of spiritual values. Through his very reticence as well as through his revelations one hears much more than the voice of New England, one hears universal values.

CARL SANDBURG

The great mid-West, that vast region of steel mills and slaughter-houses, of cornfields and prairies, of crowded cities and empty skies, spoke through Carl Sandburg. In Sandburg, industrial America found its voice: *Chicago Poems* (1916), *Cornhuskers* (1918), *Smoke and Steel* (1920), and *Good Morning, America* (1928) vibrate with the immense purring of dynamos, the rhythms of threshing arms, the gossip and laughter of construction gangs, the gigantic and tireless energy of the machine. Frankly indebted to Whitman, Sandburg's poems are less sweeping but more varied; musically his lines mark an advance.

Like Frost, Sandburg was true to *things*. But Frost was content with the inexhaustible fact and its spiritual implications; he never hoped to drain it all. Sandburg also fed on the fact, but it did not satisfy him. He had strange hungers; he hunted eagerly for the question behind, the answer beyond. The actual scene, to him, was a point of vivid and abrupt departure. Reality, far from being the earth on which he dwelt, was, for Sandburg, the ground he touched before rising; realism acted merely as a springboard from which this poet dove into fantasy. *The People, Yes* (1936) lives up to its title and lifts statement into an art of its own.

When *Chicago Poems* first appeared, it was received with

disfavor. Sandburg was accused of verbal anarchy; of a failure to distinguish prose matter from poetic material; of uncouthness, vulgarity, assaults on the English language, and a score of other crimes. In the face of those who still see only a coarseness and distorted realism in Sandburg, it cannot be said too often that he is brutal only when dealing with brutal things; that his "vulgarity" springs from love of life as a whole, not from affection for a drab or decorative part of it; that his bitterest invectives are the result of a disgust of shams. The strength of his hatred is exceeded by the challenge of his love.

EZRA POUND, THE IMAGISTS,
AND AMY LOWELL

Sandburg established himself as the most daring user of American words — words ranging from the racy metaphors of the soil to the slang of the street. But long before this, the possibilities of a new vocabulary were being tested. As early as 1865, Whitman was saying, "We must have new words, new potentialities of speech — an American range of self-expression. . . . The new times, the new people need a tongue according, yes, and what is more, they will have such a tongue — will not be satisfied until it is evolved." It is curious that one of the most effective agents to fulfill Whitman's prophecy was that little band of preoccupied specialists, the Imagists.

Ezra Pound was the first to gather the insurgents into a definite group. During 1913, he wrote and collected a number of poems illustrating the Imagist point of view, conceiving Imagism as a discriminating term like "lyricism." The poems were by English as well as American poets, and Pound had them printed in a volume: *Des Imagistes* (1914). A little later Pound withdrew from the clan. The original group began to disintegrate, and Amy Lowell, then in England, brought some of the younger members together in three yearly anthologies (*Some Imagist Poets*) which appeared in 1915, 1916, and 1917. There were, in Miss Lowell's new grouping, three Englishmen (D. H. Lawrence, Richard Ald-

ington, F. S. Flint), three Americans (H. D., John Gould Fletcher, Amy Lowell), and their creed, summed up in six statements, was as follows:

1. To use the language of common speech, but to employ always the *exact* word, not the merely decorative word.

2. To create new rhythms — as the expression of new moods. We do not insist upon "free-verse" as the only method of writing poetry. . . . We do believe that the individuality of a poet may often be better expressed in free verse than in conventional forms.

3. To allow absolute freedom in the choice of subject.

4. To present an image (hence the name: "Imagist"). We are not a school of painters, but we believe that poetry should render particulars exactly and not deal in vague generalities, however magnificent and sonorous.

5. To produce poetry that is hard and clear, never blurred or indefinite.

6. Finally, most of us believe that concentration is the very essence of poetry.

It does not seem possible that these six principles (which the Imagists often neglected in their poetry) could have provoked the storm of argument, fury, and downright vilification that broke as soon as the militant Miss Lowell began to champion them. Far from being revolutionary, these principles were not new. The Imagists themselves realized that they were merely restating ideals which had fallen into neglect when they declared, "They are the essentials of all great poetry, indeed of all great literature." Yet many conservative critics rushed wildly to combat these "heresies"! They forgot that, in trying to protect the future from such lawlessness as "using the exact word," from "freedom in the choice of subject," from the importance of "concentration," they were actually attacking the highest traditions of the past.

The quarrel succeeded in doing more good than the work of the Imagists themselves. H. D. removed herself from controversies and took up her residence in Switzerland, perfecting her delicate designs. John Gould Fletcher, a more vacillating expatriate, remained in London for years, but eventually returned to his home in Arkansas to strengthen

his gift through shifting his standards. Miss Lowell was left to carry on the battle single-handed, to defend the theories which, in practice, she was beginning to violate brilliantly. An unflagging experimenter, Miss Lowell was amazing in her versatility. She wielded a controversial cudgel with one hand and, with the other, wrote polyphonic prose, monologs in New England dialect, irregular *vers libre*, conservative couplets, a two-volume biography of Keats, myths from the Peruvian, translations from the French, echoes from the Japanese, re-creations of Indian folk-lore!

The work of the Imagists was done. Its members began to develop by themselves. They had helped to swell the tide of romantic naturalism — a tide of which their contribution was a breaker that carried its impact far inshore.

FOLK-RHYTHMS AND THE NEGRO

In a country that has not been mellowed by antiquity, that has not possessed songs for its peasantry or traditions for its singers, one cannot yet look for a wealth of folk-stuff. In the United States folk-poetry followed the path of the pioneer. At first these homely songs were mere adaptations and localized versions of English ballads and border minstrelsy, of which Cecil Sharp's *Folk Songs of the Appalachian Highlands* are excellent examples. But a more definitely native spirit found expression in various sections of these States. In the West (during the Seventies) Bret Harte and John Hay celebrated, in their own accents, the rough miners, ranchers, steamboat pilots, the supposed descendants of the emigrants from Pike County, Missouri. In the Middle West the desire for local color and music led to the popularity of James Whitcomb Riley's Hoosier ballads and the spirited jingles of Eugene Field. In the South the inspiration of the Negro spirituals and ante-bellum songs was utilized to good effect by Irwin Russell, Joel Chandler Harris, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and the contemporary Negro poets.

Everywhere today there is a revival of interest in homespun melodies and folk-created verse. John A. Lomax has published three volumes of cowboy songs — most of them

anonymous — full of tang, wild fancy, and robust humor. Mary Austin, Natalie Curtis Burlin, and Lew Sarett are chief among those who have attempted to bring the spirit of Indian tunes and chants into our poetry. National admiration has been aroused by the Aframerican culture, as evidenced by the popularity of various collections of Negro Spirituals, "Mellows," Blues, and the work of such poets as James Weldon Johnson, Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, and others. The tradition of Harte and Hay is being carried on by such racy interpreters as Harry Herbert Knibbs, Badger Clark, and Edwin Ford Piper. A huge assemblage of words and music from small towns, railroad stations, backwoods and prairies (to say nothing of barber-shops) was collected by Carl Sandburg and published in 1927 under the accurate title *The American Songbag*. But, of all contemporaries who approximated the spirit of folk-poetry, none made more striking or more indubitably American contributions than Vachel Lindsay of Springfield, Illinois.

LINDSAY AND OPPENHEIM

Lindsay was essentially a people's poet. He did not hesitate to express himself in terms of the lowest common denominator; his fingers seemed alternately on his pen and the public pulse. Lindsay was tremendously influenced by the colorful suggestions, the fantastic superstitions, the revivalistic gusto, and, above all, by the intoxicating, syncopated music that characterized the Negro in America. In "The Congo," "John Brown" and the less extended "Simon Legree," the words roll with the solemnity of an exhortation, dance with a grotesque fervor, or snap, crackle, and leap with all the humorous rhythms of a piece of intricate jazz. Lindsay caught the burly color and boisterous music of camp-meetings, minstrel shows, revival jubilees. He was an itinerant evangelist preaching the Gospel through a saxophone.

And Lindsay did more. He carried his democratic determinations further than any of his *confrères*. Dreaming of a great communal art, he insisted that all villages should be

centers of beauty, all citizens, artists. At heart a missionary even more than a minstrel, Lindsay often lost himself in his own doctrines. He frequently cheapened himself and caricatured his own gift by pandering to the vaudeville instinct, putting a noisy "punch" into everything, regardless of taste, artistry, or a sense of proportion. He was most impressive when purely fantastic or when a greater theme and a finer restraint unite (as in "The Eagle That Is Forgotten") to create a preaching that does not cease to be poetry.

Something of the same blend of prophet and poet was found in the work of James Oppenheim. Oppenheim, a throwback to the ancient Hebrew singers, rolled the music of the Psalms through his lines; his poetry, with its obvious reminders of Whitman, was biblical in its inflection, Oriental in its warmth. It carried to the Western world the color of the East, adding the gift of prophecy to purpose. In books like *War and Laughter* and *Songs for the New Age* a new analysis is added to an old intensity.

ELIOT AND HIS INFLUENCE

Two strongly opposed tendencies were noticeable immediately after 1916. The one was a growing use of the colloquial speech popularized by Sandburg, Lindsay, and Masters and heightened by Frost; the other was a striking departure from both the conversational tone and the traditional "poetic" language to which such poets as E. A. Robinson and Edna St. Vincent Millay remained loyal. The break in idiom was brought about by T. S. Eliot, who brought it from France. Eliot used the technique of the Symbolist school with such skill that he soon had a host of imitators on both sides of the Atlantic. Some were unable, some unwilling to follow Eliot's inner difficulties and despairs, but all were fascinated by his technical devices. The formula was, roughly, this: To reveal man in his complex relation to the universe the poet must show him not only concerned with the immensities but with the trivialities of daily life, with a sense of the past continually interrupting the present, and with swiftly contradictory moods. This was, obviously, a difficult if not impos-

sible program to achieve in any one poem or even a set of poems. Eliot attempted to show the ruin of present day culture by making a disrupted poetry from the wreckage of the literature of the past. His technique was equally contradictory and often confusing: a rapid leaping from image to image with a minimum of "explanatory" metaphors; a liberal use of discords, juxtaposing tense images and prosy statements; the continual play of free association, in which one idea prompted a chain of others, sometimes gaining a new series of overtones, sometimes sacrificing all continuity.

Following Eliot, the ultra-modern poet built a world of his own, a world of private allusions, personal allegories, and themes far removed from those of the ordinary world. The results were bewildering and often baffling; the poems were like sets of ornate, decorative, and mostly unintelligible hieroglyphics. But they were not without their admirers and disciples.

THE NEW LYRICISTS

The lyric note was bound to be affected. It, too, fluctuated to express the shift from convention to revolt, from decision to doubt, from a fixed form to an almost dissolving line. John Crowe Ransom, at first influenced by Frost and Eliot, perfected his own tone, half tart, half tender. Conrad Aiken developed a peculiarly wavering music capable of haunting effects, both in the early lyrics and the later somber preludes. Stephen Vincent Benét and William Rose Benét, brothers in blood and balladry, plundered modernity and antiquity for their fancies; the former, taking the Civil War for a background in *John Brown's Body*, constructed a many-voiced lyric of epic proportions. Archibald MacLeish combined the old music with a new meaning, and Robinson Jeffers brought a fresh vigor, even violence, to the long, unrhymed line. The short lyrics of Robert Frost grew consistently in strength and suggestiveness.

The work of the women ranged from the outspoken to the involved. Two distinct influences governed many of them: Emily Dickinson and Lizette Woodworth Reese. The epi-

grammatic condensations of the former affected an entire generation with increasing force. The firm speech and sparse imagery of the latter won many away from the cloying old-fashioned love-songs. Edna St. Vincent Millay, in the later sonnets no less than in the early "Renaissance," deepened an already impassioned note, increasing the admiration as well as the size of her audience. Sara Teasdale intensified a simple but flexible melodic line. Jean Starr Untermeyer lifted the ordinary round of woman's everyday into novelty and, not seldom, into ecstasy.

Others, refining their poetry of a too thickly human passion, turned to an elliptical metaphysics. The overtones of the late Elizabethans are in the accents of Louise Bogan, Léonie Adams, and Elinor Wylie, among others. Elinor Wylie acknowledged the relationship implicitly; the title of her first volume (*Nets to Catch the Wind*) was taken from a poem by Webster, the title of her last (*Angels and Earthly Creatures*) from a sermon by Donne. But these poets did not depend too much on intellectual virtuosity and involved images; their sensibility was their own. Elinor Wylie, never "confusing the spiritual and the sensual either through false fear or false reverence," began with verbal brilliance and ended by celebrating the radiance of spirit and "the pure and valiant mind." Léonie Adams, more withdrawn, yielded her secret only to those who were already poets, though even the unlettered could sense the music and authority of her verse. Sara Henderson Hay regarded the immensities with a half-wistful, half-whimsical speculation.

EFFECTS OF THE DEPRESSION

The financial crash of October, 1929, and the ensuing depression were not immediately reflected in the poetry of the period. But by 1933 it was evident that a crisis had occurred in literature as well as in finance and government. The poets turned, tentatively enough, to a consideration of economic and social problems; some of them deserted poetry altogether. It is noteworthy that whereas the five years from 1913 to 1918 produced a dozen or more poets of national

importance, not more than two or three new poets of any significance appeared between 1930 and 1938.

Poetry seemed to suffer a partial paralysis, unable to express the depressed times except by negation. Yet, no matter what the conditions, man cannot remain inarticulate for long, and there were signs that the younger poets were grappling with the situation. It was not long before they attempted to express the universal bewilderment, doubtfully, even desperately. Theirs was a more difficult task. Values were distorted, standards questioned, the traditional responses were deadened. But the basic feelings, disturbed and temporarily stunned, could not remain paralyzed. A few poets dared to sound social implications through the uncertain spirit of the times; and poetry, which refines all experience through the filter of the emotions, began to reassert itself.

THE WIDER PANORAMA

The poets of the period answered the demands put upon them by a rapidly changing civilization. They reflected the paradoxical energy of the age and its sterility, its contradictory appetite for realism and fantasy, its skepticism and its submerged faith. They sounded a range hitherto barely suggested in America, creating a panoramic poetry. Differing widely from most of their English fellow-craftsmen, they were far less hampered by the burdens of tradition or the necessity of casting them off. Geographically, the range was wide. As the country matured, the poets grew with it, springing up in most unlikely places, ready to celebrate urban miracles of stone and steel or country-wide silences no less than the traditional scenes and emotions. New notes in light verse were struck by Franklin P. Adams, Dorothy Parker, Phyllis McGinley, and Ogden Nash; they were amusing and critical, different and distinctly American.

THE NEW SPIRIT

Most of the poets represented in this collection found vigorous material in a world of honest and often harsh reality. They learned to distinguish beauty from prettiness;

to wring loveliness out of squalor; to search for truth even in forbidding places.

With the acceptance of the material of everyday life, there came a further simplification: the use of the language of everyday. The stilted phrases were discarded in favor of an ordinary vocabulary. It would be hard to find a representative poet employing such awkward and outworn contractions as *'twixt*, *'mongst*, *ope*'; such evidences of poor padding as *adown*, *did go*, *doth smile*; such rubber-stamps (*clichés* is the French term) as *heavenly blue*, *roseate glow*, *golden hope*, *girlish grace*, *gentle breeze*, *pearly dew*, *purple hills*, *sparkling eyes*, etc. The *peradventures*, *forsooths* and *mayhaps* have disappeared (one hopes) forever.

As the speech of the modern poet grew less elaborate, so did the patterns embodying it. Not necessarily discarding rhyme, regular rhythm, or any of the musical assets of the older poets, forms grew simpler; the intricate versification gave way to lines that reflect or suggest the tones of animated, even exalted, speech.

In conclusion it must be repeated that though this collection claims to be panoramic it is also critical. Detailed study of every corner of the field is, therefore, impossible; the period being particularly rich in these so articulate States, many omissions were imperative. The editor realizes that any gathering, no matter how voluminous, cannot be a summary but only an introduction to an epoch. The purpose of an anthology, he repeats dogmatically, is to stimulate rather than to satisfy. It is the provoking as well as the sharing of enjoyment which is the very purpose of poetry.

L. U.

WALT WHITMAN

Walt Whitman was born May 31, 1819, in West Hills, near Huntington, Long Island ("fish-shaped Paumanok"). When he was still a child, his father left the farm which had been in the family for generations, and the Whitmans moved to Brooklyn. There, after a fitful schooling, young Whitman became a printer's apprentice. For twenty years he earned his living as printer, reporter, editorial writer, occasional critic and wandering journalist. He even wrote a crude temperance tract disguised as a novel. Whitman was, however, anything but the "unlettered and uncultured primitive" whom his detractors (and some of his well-meaning apologists) have pictured. He had not merely read but absorbed Shakespeare, Homer, the Bible — and the elemental surge of these can be heard in his early prose poems and in the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*.

The first edition of *Leaves of Grass* (1855) made its appearance as a poorly printed pamphlet of twelve poems brought out anonymously and bearing, instead of a signature, a portrait of the author with one hand in his pocket, one on his hip, open shirt, and a slouch hat rakishly tilted. One of the first copies of the pamphlet was sent to Ralph Waldo Emerson, which — considering Whitman's indebtedness to Emerson in spirit if not in form — was no more than proper. With something of the master's gratification on being hailed by an unknown but fervent disciple, Emerson immediately wrote, "I give you joy of your free and brave thought. . . . I find the courage of treatment which so delights us, and which large perception only can inspire. I greet you at the beginning of a great career."

A few other American writers realized that a new force had been flung up in the Western world; in England, Swinburne and Rossetti were roused by the "buffalo strength" of this strange voice. But criticism, for the most part, was adverse, and the favorites of the reading public continued to be the established group in and around Boston. Whitman, undeterred by jeers, feeling his foothold "tenon'd and mortis'd in granite," labored upon his magnum opus, changed titles, added entire sections, revealed, for all but careless readers, his natural artistry. By 1861 *Leaves of Grass* was in its third edition.

During the Civil War, Whitman served as nurse and wound-dresser and, in 1865, he was given a position in the Department of the Interior. Here a certain secretary, James Harlan, having read *Leaves of Grass*, conferred immortality upon himself by dismissing

Whitman because of his "pernicious writing." In 1866, Whitman's *Drum-Taps* appeared, a volume that not only reflected his war experiences but contained two of the most stirring elegies ever written. Less provocative than his first "barbaric yawps," such later works as *Goodbye My Fancy* (1891) are no less rich in observation and eloquence. Whitman died in Camden, New Jersey, March 26, 1892.

A complete understanding of Whitman is difficult, especially since so much of his work is self-contradictory. It has mass and magnitude, yet it is also curiously private and personal. There are large convictions here, and small affectations. The American speech is stressed — "a new, native language" — yet there are many queer interruptions of hybrid and almost ridiculous phraseology.

The contradictions remain to trouble the appraiser; Whitman's final significance has not yet been summarized. But no one can fail to recognize the greatness of his contribution. His wide and windy optimism is an emotional if not an intellectual influence. His wholeheartedness, his large yea-saying, his sense of released power, the separate illuminating pictures and prophecies — all these have an irresistible appeal. They enlarge horizons; they expand the air.

Whitman's poetry will persist because it transcends the man and his times. The poet was not exaggerating when he claimed that his monumental book "contained multitudes." For all his inconsistencies he achieved permanence; employing words, he harnessed elements.

The selections which follow are no more than a taste of the poet's magnitude. Whitman is most himself in the longer, panoramic poems — and one of those would far exceed the allotment for the entire group. Selection is thus doubly difficult, and in this dilemma the editor has decided to omit the universally known "O Captain, My Captain!" in order to make room for less familiar but even more characteristic quotations, especially those from Whitman's long and eloquent "Song of Myself."

I HEAR AMERICA SINGING

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,
 Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be
 blithe and strong,
 The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,
 The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves
 off work,
 The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the
 deckhand singing on the steamboat deck,

The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing as he stands,
The wood-cutter's song, the plowboy's on his way in the morning, or at noon intermission or at sundown,
The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at work, or of the girl sewing or washing,
Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,
The day what belongs to the day — at night the party of young fellows, robust, friendly,
Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

FROM "SONG OF MYSELF"

I celebrate myself, and sing myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.
I loafe and invite my soul,
I lean and loafe at my ease observing a spear of summer grass. . . .

*

A child said *What is the grass?* fetching it to me with full hands;
How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is any more than he.
I guess it must be the flag of my disposition, out of hopeful green stuff woven.

Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the Lord,
A scented gift and remembrancer designedly dropt,
Bearing the owner's name someway in the corners, that we may see and remark, and say *Whose?* . . .

And now it seems to me the beautiful, uncut hair of graves.

Tenderly will I use you, curling grass.
It may be you transpire from the breasts of young men;
It may be if I had known them I would have loved them;
It may be you are from old people, and from women, and from offspring taken soon out of their mothers' laps.

What do you think has become of the young and old men?
And what do you think has become of the women and children?

They are alive and well somewhere;
The smallest sprout shows there is really no death. . . .
All goes onward and outward — nothing collapses.

*

In all people I see myself, none more and not one a barley-corn less,
And the good or bad I say of myself I say of them.
I know I am solid and sound,
To me the converging objects of the universe perpetually flow,
All are written to me, and I must get what the writing means.

I know I am deathless,
I know this orbit of mine cannot be swept by a carpenter's compass,
I know I shall not pass like a child's curlacue cut with a burnt stick at night.

I know I am august,
I do not trouble my spirit to vindicate itself or be understood,
I see that the elementary laws never apologize.

I exist as I am, that is enough,
If no other in the world be aware I sit content,
And if each and all be aware I sit content.

One world is aware and by far the largest to me, and that is myself,
And whether I come to my own today or in ten thousand or ten million years,
I can cheerfully take it now, or with equal cheerfulness I can wait.

My foothold is tenon'd and mortis'd in granite,
I laugh at what you call dissolution,
And I know the amplitude of time.

*

I am he that walks with the tender and growing night,
I call to the earth and sea half-held by the night.

Press close bare-bosom'd night — press close magnetic
nourishing night!
Night of south winds — night of the large few stars!
Still nodding night — mad naked summer night.

Smile O voluptuous cool-breath'd earth!
Earth of the slumbering and liquid trees!
Earth of departed sunset — earth of the mountains misty-
topt!
Earth of the vitreous pour of the full moon just tinged with
blue!
Earth of shine and dark mottling the tide of the river!
Earth of the limpid gray of clouds brighter and clearer for
my sake!
Far-swooping elbow'd earth — rich apple-blossom'd earth!
Smile, for your lover comes.

*

With music strong I come, with my cornets and my drums,
I play not marches for accepted victors only, I play marches
for conquer'd and slain persons.

Have you heard that it was good to gain the day?
I also say it is good to fall, battles are lost in the same spirit
in which they are won.

Vivas to those who have fail'd!
And to those whose war-vessels sank in the sea!
And to those themselves who sank in the sea!

And to all generals that lost engagements, and all overcome
heroes!

And the numberless unknown heroes equal to the greatest
heroes known!

*

I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journeywork of
the stars,

And the pismire ¹ is equally perfect, and a grain of sand, and
the egg of the wren,

And the tree-toad is a chef-d'œuvre ² for the highest,

And the running blackberry would adorn the parlors of
heaven,

And the narrowest hinge in my hand puts to scorn all ma-
chinery,

And the cow crunching with depress'd head surpasses any
statue,

And a mouse is miracle enough to stagger sextillions of
infidels.

*

I think I could turn and live with animals, they're so placid
and self-contain'd,

I stand and look at them long and long.

They do not sweat and whine about their condition,

They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins,

They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God,

Not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented with the mania
of owning things,

Not one is respectable or unhappy over the whole earth.

*

Immense have been the preparations for me,
Faithful and friendly the arms that have help'd me.

Cycles ferried my cradle, rowing and rowing like cheerful
boatmen.

For room to me stars kept aside in their own rings. . . .

¹ The ant.

² A masterpiece.

All forces have been steadily employ'd to complete and
delight me;
Now on this spot I stand with my robust soul.

*

Why should I wish to see God better than this day?
I see something of God each hour of the twenty-four, and
each moment then,
In the faces of men and women I see God, and in my own
face in the glass,
I find letters from God dropt in the street, and every one
is sign'd by God's name,
And I leave them where they are, for I know that wheresoe'er
I go,
Others will punctually come for ever and ever.

*

Do I contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself,
(I am large, I contain multitudes).
I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslatable,
I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world. . . .

I depart as air, I shake my white locks at the runaway sun,
I effuse my flesh in eddies, and drift it in lacy jags.

I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love;
If you want me again look for me under your boot-soles.

You will hardly know who I am or what I mean,
But I shall be good health to you nevertheless,
And filter and fibre your blood.

Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,
Missing me one place search another,
I stop somewhere waiting for you.

FROM "CROSSING BROOKLYN FERRY"

It avails not, time nor place — distance avails not, . . .
 I am with you, you men and women of a generation, or ever
 so many generations hence,
 Just as you feel when you look on the river and sky, so I felt,
 Just as any of you is one of a living crowd, I was one of a
 crowd,
 Just as you are refresh'd by the gladness of the river and
 the bright flow, I was refresh'd,
 Just as you stand and lean on the rail, yet hurry with the
 swift current, I stood yet was hurried,
 Just as you look on the numberless masts of ships and the
 thick-stemm'd pipes of steamboats, I look'd.

SONG OF THE OPEN ROAD

(*A Fragment*)

Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open road,
 Healthy, free, the world before me,
 The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose.

Henceforth I ask not good-fortune, I myself am good-fortune,
 Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more, need
 nothing,
 Done with indoor complaints, libraries, querulous criticisms,
 Strong and content I travel the open road.

RECONCILIATION

Word over all, beautiful as the sky,
 Beautiful that war and all its deeds of carnage must in time
 be utterly lost,
 That the hands of the sisters Death and Night incessantly
 softly wash again, and ever again, this soil'd world;
 For my enemy is dead, a man divine as myself is dead,
 I look where he lies white-faced and still in the coffin — I
 draw near,

Bend down and touch lightly with my lips the white face
in the coffin.

WHEN I HEARD THE LEARN'D ASTRONOMER

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before
me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide,
and measure them,
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with
much applause in the lecture-room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

MIRACLES

Why, who makes much of a miracle?
As to me I know of nothing else but miracles,
Whether I walk the streets of Manhattan,
Or dart my sight over the roofs of houses toward the sky,
Or wade with naked feet along the beach just in the edge of
the water,
Or stand under trees in the woods,
Or talk by day with any one I love,
Or sit at table at dinner with the rest,
Or look at strangers opposite me riding in the car,
Or watch honey-bees busy around the hive of a summer fore-
noon,
Or animals feeding in the fields,
Or the wonderfulness of the sundown, or of stars shining so
quiet and bright,
Or the exquisite delicate thin curve of the new moon in
spring;
These with the rest, one and all, are to me miracles,
The whole referring, yet each distinct and in its place.
To me every hour of the light and dark is a miracle,

Every cubic inch of space is a miracle,
Every square yard of the surface of the earth is spread with
the same,
Every foot of the interior swarms with the same.

To me the sea is a continual miracle,
The fishes that swim — the rocks — the motion of the waves
— the ships with men in them,
What stranger miracles are there?

THE LAST INVOCATION

At the last, tenderly,

From the walls of the powerful fortress'd house,
From the clasp of the knitted locks, from the keep of the
well-closed doors,
Let me be wafted.
Let me glide noiselessly forth;
With the key of softness unlock the locks — with a whisper,
Set open the doors O soul.

Tenderly — be not impatient,
(Strong is your hold O mortal flesh,
Strong is your hold O love.)

FROM "WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOORYARD BLOOM'D"

When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,
And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in the
night,
I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.

Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring,
Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the west,
And thought of him I love.

O powerful western fallen star!
O shades of night — O moody, tearful night!
O great star disappear'd — O the black murk that hides the
star!
O cruel hands that hold me powerless — O helpless soul of
me!
O harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul.

In the dooryard fronting an old farm-house near the white-
wash'd palings,
Stands the lilac-bush tall-growing with heart-shaped leaves
of rich green,
With many a pointed blossom rising delicate, with the per-
fume strong I love,
With every leaf a miracle — and from this bush in the door-
yard,
With delicate-color'd blossoms and heart-shaped leaves of
rich green,
A sprig with its flower I break.

A NOISELESS PATIENT SPIDER

A noiseless patient spider,
I mark'd where on a little promontory it stood isolated,
Mark'd how to explore the vacant vast surrounding,
It launch'd forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself.
Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speeding them.

And you O my soul where you stand,
Surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans of space,
Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, seeking the spheres
to connect them.
Till the bridge you will need be form'd, till the ductile an-
chor hold,
Till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere, O my
soul.

JOY, SHIPMATE, JOY!

Joy, shipmate, joy!
(Pleas'd to my soul at death I cry,)

Our life is closed, our life begins,
 The long, long anchorage we leave,
 The ship is clear at last, she leaps!
 She swiftly courses from the shore,
 Joy, shipmate, joy!

YOUTH AND AGE, DAY AND NIGHT

Youth, large, lusty, loving — full of grace, force, fascination,

Do you know that Old Age may come after you with equal grace, force, fascination?

Day full-blown and splendid — day of the immense sun, action, ambition, laughter,

The Night follows close with millions of suns, and sleep, and restoring darkness.

EMILY DICKINSON

Emily (Elizabeth) Dickinson was born in Amherst, Massachusetts, December 10, 1830. She died in the house in which she was born. In her youth she was high-spirited and full of humor, but after the age of twenty-six she became a physical recluse and a kind of spiritual hermit; she rarely set foot beyond her doorstep. "She habitually concealed her mind, like her person, from all but a very few friends," wrote Thomas Wentworth Higginson, who may be said to have discovered her, "and it was with great difficulty that she was persuaded to print, during her lifetime, three or four poems." She disliked publicity so much that those four published poems had to be taken from her almost by stealth, and, though she wrote more than a thousand poems in secrecy, the first volume of her poetry did not appear until 1890, four years after her death.

Keeping herself strictly to herself, she became a mystery, a legend even in her own lifetime. Undisturbed by the outside world, she continued to ignore all people except her immediate family and a few intimate friends; she devoted herself to the household, to her haking, her preserving, and her poetry. In 1885 she was suddenly taken ill; she died of Bright's disease in her fifty-sixth year, May 15th, 1886.

Her fame grew gradually; only a small circle of readers appreciated the peculiar keenness and concision of her thought. But she was never without enthusiastic admirers. *Poems* (1890) was followed by *Poems: Second Series* (1890) and *Poems: Third Series* (1896), the contents being collected and edited by her two friends, Thomas Wentworth Higginson and Mabel Loomis Todd. Several years later, a further generous volume was assembled by her niece, Martha Dickinson Bianchi, entitled *The Single Hound* (1914).

Although the recent revival of interest in poetry drew attention to the individuality of Emily Dickinson's expression, her readers remained few. An occasional article appeared, showing her "lack of control" or, beneath a cover of condescension, ridiculing her "hit-or-miss grammar, sterile rhythms, and appalling rhymes." Suddenly, without warning, she leaped into international prominence. Almost forty years after her death, her name was everywhere. The year 1924 saw the publication of Martha Dickinson Bianchi's important volume, *The Life and Letters of Emily Dickinson*, the first collected *Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson* and the first English compilation, *Selected Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited with a splendid prefatory essay by Conrad Aiken.

The enthusiasm attending the triple appearance was unbounded. Martin Armstrong, the English poet, said in a review, "Mr. Aiken calls Emily Dickinson's poetry 'perhaps the finest by a woman in the English language.' I quarrel only with his 'perhaps.'" Nor were the other comments less definite. "A feminine Blake," "an epigrammatic Walt Whitman," "a New England mystic," were a few of the characterizations fastened upon her. Other appraisals sought to "interpret" her verses in the light of the "mystery" of her life. It is no secret that Emily Dickinson fell in love with a man already married, that she renounced her love, and withdrew from the world. But "the Amherst nun" would have repudiated the analysts as vigorously as she, whose verses and letters brim with mischievous fancy, would have laughed at the grandiose epithets.

In 1929 there was published another generous collection of "undiscovered" or "withheld" poems, *Further Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Martha Dickinson Bianchi and Alfred Leete Hampson. There were one hundred and seventy-six hitherto unpublished pieces, and their clear beauty as well as mysterious appearance caused something of a furore. The excitement increased in 1930, the centenary of Emily Dickinson's birth, when three new (and widely differing) biographies appeared. A new volume, *Unpublished Poems by Emily Dickinson*, appeared toward the end of 1935.

Emily Dickinson wrote chiefly of four things: Nature, Love, Life, and Death. Much of her work is like inspired improvisations, com-

positions not intended for anyone but the composer. Some of it is erratic, obviously unfinished, thrown off in the heat of creation; some of it is obscure. But in most of the poems the leaps of thought are so daring, the epithets so fanciful and yet so exact, the imagination so startling and original that the lines are little short of revelation. One gasps at the way this poet packs huge ideas into tense quatrains. Hers is a kind of super-observation which lives in such magical and unforgettable phrases as: a dog's "belated feet, like intermittent plush," a humming bird whose flight is "a route of evanescence, a resonance of emerald," an engine "neighing like Boanerges," a mushroom whose whole career "is shorter than a snake's delay," the wind "tapping like a tired man."

Her letters, like her poems, have an unpredictable way of turning about their subject; they combine the impish with the mystical; they announce tremendous things in an offhand tone of voice. Few definitions of poetry give us the *feeling* of poetry as sharply as her informal:

"If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can ever warm me, I know it is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know this is poetry. These are the only ways I know it."

A BOOK

There is no frigate like a book
 To take us lands away,
 Nor any courser like a page
 Of prancing poetry.
 This traverse may the poorest take
 Without oppress of toil;
 How frugal is the chariot
 That bears a human soul!

CHARTLESS

I never saw a moor,
 I never saw the sea;
 Yet know I how the heather looks,
 And what a wave must be.

I never spoke with God,
 Nor visited in Heaven;

Yet certain am I of the spot
As if the chart were given.

INDIAN SUMMER

These are the days when birds come back,
A very few, a bird or two,
To take a backward look.

These are the days when skies put on
The old, old sophistries of June, —
A blue and gold mistake.

Oh, fraud that can not cheat the bee,
Almost thy plausibility
Induces my belief,

Till ranks of seeds their witness bear,
And softly through the altered air
Hurries a timid leaf!

Oh, sacrament of summer days,
Oh, last communion in the haze,
Permit a child to join,

Thy sacred emblems to partake,
Thy consecrated bread to break,
Taste thine immortal wine!

SUSPENSE

Elysium is as far as to
The very nearest room,
If in that room a friend await
Felicity or doom.

What fortitude the soul contains,
That it can so endure
The accent of a coming foot,
The opening of a door.

INEBRIATE OF AIR

I taste a liquor never brewed,
From tankards scooped in pearl;
Not all the vats upon the Rhine
Yield such an alcohol!

Inebriate of air am I,
And debauchee of dew,
Reeling, through endless summer days,
From inns of molten blue.

When landlords turn the drunken bee
Out of the foxglove's door,
When butterflies renounce their drams,
I shall but drink the more!

Till seraphs swing their snowy hats,
And saints to windows run,
To see the little tippler
Leaning against the sun!

JOY IN INSECURITY

Go not too near a house of rose,
The depredation of a breeze
Or inundation of a dew
Alarm its walls away;
Nor try to tie the butterfly;
Nor climb the bars of ecstasy.
In insecurity to lie
Is joy's insuring quality.

BECLOUDED

The sky is low, the clouds are mean,
A traveling flake of snow
Across a barn or through a rut
Debates if it will go.

A narrow wind complains all day
How some one treated him;
Nature, like us, is sometimes caught
Without her diadem.

PEDIGREE

The pedigree of honey
Does not concern the bee;
A clover, any time, to him
Is aristocracy.

BEAUTY AND TRUTH

I died for beauty, but was scarce
Adjusted in the tomb,
When one who died for truth was lain
In an adjoining room.

He questioned softly why I failed?
"For beauty," I replied.
"And I for truth,— the two are one;
We brethren are," he said.

And so, as kinsmen met a night,
We talked between the rooms,
Until the moss had reached our lips
And covered up our names.

MYSTERIES

The murmur of a bee
A witchcraft yieldeth me.
If any ask me why,
"Twere easier to die
Than tell.

EMILY DICKINSON

The red upon the hill
Taket away my will;
If anybody sneer,
Take care, for God is here,
That's all.

The breaking of the day
Addeth to my degree;
If any ask me how,
Artist, who drew me so,
Must tell!

A CEMETERY

This quiet Dust was Gentlemen and Ladies,
And Lads and Girls;
Was laughter and ability and sighing,
And frocks and curls.
This passive place a Summer's nimble mansion,
Where Bloom and Bees
Fulfilled their Oriental Circuit,
Then ceased like these.

PRECIOUS WORDS

He ate and drank the precious words.
His spirit grew robust;
He knew no more that he was poor,
Nor that his frame was dust.
He danced along the dingy days,
And this bequest of wings
Was but a book. What liberty
A loosened spirit brings!

John Hay was born at Salem, Indiana, October 8, 1838, graduated from Brown University in 1858 and was admitted to the Illinois bar a few years later. He became private secretary to Lincoln, then major and assistant adjutant-general under General Gilmore, then secretary of legation at Paris, *chargé d'affaires* at Vienna and secretary of legation at Madrid.

His few vivid *Pike County Ballads* came as a happy accident. When Hay returned from Spain in 1870, bringing with him his *Castilian Days*, he had visions of becoming a traditional lyric poet. But he found everyone reading Bret Harte's short stories and the new expression of the rude West. He speculated upon the possibility of doing something similar, translating the characters into poetry. The result was the six racy ballads in a vein utterly different from everything Hay wrote before or after.

Hay was in politics all the latter part of his life. One of the most brilliant Secretaries of State, he died in 1905.

JIM BLUDSO

Wall, no! I can't tell whar he lives,
Becase he don't live, you see;
Leastways, he's got out of the habit
Of livin' like you and me.
Whar have you been for the last three year
That you haven't heard folks tell
How Jimmy Bludso passed in his checks
The night of the Prairie Belle?

He warn't no saint, — them engineers
Is all pretty much alike, —
One wife in Natchez-under-the-Hill
And another one here, in Pike;
A keerless man in his talk was Jim,
And an awkward hand in a row,
But he never flunked, and he never lied, —
I reckon he never knowed how.

And this was all the religion he had:
To treat his engine well;

Never be passed on the river;
To mind the pilot's bell;
And if ever the Prairie Belle took fire,
A thousand times he swore,
He'd hold her nozzle agin the bank
Till the last soul got ashore.

All boats has their day on the Mississip,
And her day come at last, —
The Movastar was a better boat,
But the Belle she *wouldn't* be passed.
And so she came tearin' along that night —
The oldest craft on the line —
With a nigger squat on her safety-valve,
And her furnace crammed, rosin and pine.

The fire bust out as she clar'd the bar,
And burnt a hole in the night,
And quick as a flash she turned and made
For that willer-bank on the right.
Thar was runnin' and cussin', but Jim yelled out,
Over all the infernal roar,
"I'll hold her nozzle agin the bank
Till the last galoot's ashore."

Through the hot, black breath of the burnin' boat
Jim Bludso's voice was heard,
And they all had trust in his cussedness,
And knowed he would keep his word.
And, sure's you're born, they all got off
Afore the smokestacks fell, —
And Bludso's ghost went up alone
In the smoke of the Prairie Belle.

He warn't no saint, — but at jedgment
I'd run my chance with Jim,
'Longside of some pious gentlemen
That wouldn't shook hands with him.

He seen his duty, a dead-sure thing. —
And went for it thar and then;
And Christ ain't a goin' to be too hard
On a man that died for men.

BRET HARTE

(Francis) Bret Harte was born August 25, 1839, at Albany, New York. Late in 1853, his widowed mother went to California with a party of relatives, and when he was fifteen Bret Harte followed. There he became a journalist.

Harte's fame came suddenly. Late in the sixties, he had written a burlesque in rhyme of two Western gamblers trying to fleece a guileless Chinaman who claimed to know nothing about cards but who, it turned out, was scarcely as innocent as he appeared. Instead of passing unnoticed, the poem was quoted everywhere; it swept the West and captivated the East. When *The Luck of Roaring Camp* followed, Harte became not only a national but an international figure. *East and West Poems* appeared in 1871; in 1872 Harte published an enlarged *Poetical Works* including many earlier pieces. His scores of short stories represent Harte at his best; they are the work of a lesser and self-conscious Dickens.

In 1878 he went to Germany as consul. Two years later he was transferred to Scotland and, after five years there, went to London, where he remained the rest of his life. Harte's later period remains mysteriously shrouded. He never came back to America, not even for a visit; he separated himself from all the most intimate associations of his early life. He died, suddenly, at Camberley, England, May 6, 1902.

"JIM"

Say there! P'r'aps
Some on you chaps
Might know Jim Wild?
Well, — no offense:
Thar ain't no sense
In gittin' riled!

Jim was my chum
Up on the Bar:

That's why I come
Down from up yar,
Lookin' for Jim.
Thank ye, sir! *You*
Ain't of that crew, —
Blest if you are!

Money? Not much:
That ain't my kind;
I ain't no such.
Rum? I don't mind,
Seein' it's you.

Well, this yer Jim, —
Did you know him?
Jes' 'bout your size;
Same kind of eyes; —
Well, that is strange:
Why, it's two year
Since he came here,
Sick, for a change.

Well, here's to us:
Eh?
The h—— you say!
Dead?
That little cuss?

What makes you star',
You over thar?
Can't a man drop
's glass in yer shop
But you must r'ar?
It wouldn't take
D——d much to break
You and your bar.

Dead!
Poor — little — Jim!
Why, thar was me,

Jones, and Bob Lee,
Harry and Ben, —
No-account men:
Then to take *him*!

Well, thar — Good-bye.
No more, sir — I —

Eh?

What's that you say?
Why, dern it! — sho! —
No? Yes! By Joe!

Sold!

Sold! Why, you limb,
You ornery,
Derned, old,
Long-legged Jim.

JOAQUIN MILLER

Cincinnatus (Heine) Miller, or, to give him the name he adopted, Joaquin Miller, was born in 1841 of immigrant parents. As he himself writes, "My cradle was a covered wagon, pointed west. I was born in a covered wagon, I am told, at or about the time it crossed the line dividing Indiana from Ohio." The distance covered from the midwestern to the far western home was about 3000 miles, and it took almost eight months to make the journey.

At fifteen Miller lived with the Indians as one of them; in 1859 (at the age of eighteen) he attended a mission-school "college" in Eugene, Oregon; between 1860 and 1865 he was express-messenger, editor of a pacifist newspaper suppressed for opposing the Civil War, lawyer and, occasionally, a poet. He held a minor judgeship from 1866 to 1870.

His first book (*Specimens*) appeared in 1868, his second (*Joaquin et al.*, from which he took his name) in 1869. No response — not even from "the bards of San Francisco Bay" to whom he dedicated the latter volume. He was chagrined, discouraged, angry. He shook the dust of America from his feet; went to London; published a volume (*Pacific Poems*) at his own expense and — overnight — became a sensation! When he entered Victorian parlors in his velvet jacket, hip-boots, and flowing hair, childhood visions of the "wild

and woolly Westerner" were realized; the very bombast of his work was glorified as "typically American."

From 1872 to 1886, Miller traveled about the Continent. In 1887 he returned to California, dwelling on the Heights, helping to found an experimental Greek academy for aspiring writers. He died there, after a determinedly picturesque life, in 1913.

FROM "BYRON"

In men whom men condemn as ill
I find so much of goodness still,
In men whom men pronounce divine
I find so much of sin and blot,
I do not dare to draw a line
Between the two, where God has not.

COLUMBUS

Behind him lay the gray Azores,
Behind the Gates of Hercules;
Before him not the ghost of shores,
Before him only shoreless seas.
The good mate said: "Now must we pray,
For lo! the very stars are gone.
Brave Admiral, speak, what shall I say?"
"Why, say 'Sail on! sail on! and on!'"

"My men grow mutinous day by day;
My men grow ghastly wan and weak."
The stout mate thought of home; a spray
Of salt wave washed his swarthy cheek.
"What shall I say, brave Admiral, say,
If we sight naught but seas at dawn?"
"Why, you shall say at break of day,
'Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!'"

They sailed and sailed, as winds might blow,
Until at last the blanched mate said,

"Why, now not even God would know
Should I and all my men fall dead.
These very winds forget their way,
For God from these dread seas is gone.
Now speak, brave Admiral, speak and say" —
He said: "Sail on! sail on! and on!"

They sailed. They sailed. Then spake the mate:
"This mad sea shows his teeth tonight.
He curls his lip, he lies in wait,
With lifted teeth, as if to bite!
Brave Admiral, say but one good word:
What shall we do when hope is gone?"
The words leapt like a leaping sword:
"Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!"

Then, pale and worn, he kept his deck,
And peered through darkness. Ah, that night
Of all dark nights! And then a speck —
A light! a light! a light! a light!
It grew, a starlit flag unfurled!
It grew to be Time's burst of dawn.
He gained a world; he gave that world
Its grandest lesson: "On! sail on!"

EDWARD ROWLAND SILL

Edward Rowland Sill was born at Windsor, Connecticut, in 1841. In 1861 he was graduated from Yale and shortly thereafter his poor health compelled him West. After various unsuccessful experiments, he drifted into teaching, mostly in the English department of the University of California. *The Hermitage*, his first volume, was published in 1867. His two posthumous books are *Poems* (1887) and *Hermione and Other Poems* (1899).

Sill died, after bringing something of the Eastern culture to the West, in 1887. "Opportunity" has persisted not only because of its "message" but because of its vigorous expression.

OPPORTUNITY

This I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream: —
There spread a cloud of dust along a plain;
And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged
A furious battle, and men yelled, and swords
Shocked upon swords and shields. A prince's banner
Wavered, then staggered backward, hemmed by foes.
A craven hung along the battle's edge,
And thought, "Had I a sword of keener steel —
That blue blade that the king's son bears, — but this
Blunt thing — !" he snapt and flung it from his hand,
And lowering crept away and left the field.
Then came the king's son, wounded, sore bestead,
And weaponless, and saw the broken sword,
Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,
And ran and snatched it, and with battle-shout
Lifted afresh he hewed his enemy down,
And saved a great cause that heroic day.

SIDNEY LANIER

Sidney Lanier was born at Macon, Georgia, February 3, 1842. His was a family of musicians (Lanier himself was a skilful performer on various instruments), and it is not surprising that his verse emphasizes — even overstresses — the influence of music on poetry. He attended Oglethorpe College, graduating at the age of eighteen (1860), and, a year later, volunteered as a private in the Confederate army. After several months' imprisonment (he had been captured while acting as signal officer on a blockade-runner), Lanier was released in February, 1865.

Abandoning the practice of law, he became a flute-player in the Peabody Symphony Orchestra in 1873 in Baltimore. Here he wrote his best poetry. In 1879, he was made lecturer on English in Johns Hopkins University, and it was for his courses there that he wrote a brilliant if not conclusive study, *The Science of English Verse*. Besides his poetry, he wrote several books for boys, the two most popular being *The Boy's Froissart* (1878) and *The Boy's King Arthur* (1880). He died, a victim of tuberculosis, in the mountains of North Carolina, September 7, 1881.

Lanier ranks high among our minor poets. Such dexterous rhymes as "The Song of the Chattahoochee" and parts of the symphonic "Hymns of the Marshes" are sure of a place in American literature.

SONG OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE

Out of the hills of Habersham,
Down the valleys of Hall,
I hurry amain to reach the plain,
Run the rapid and leap the fall,
Split at the rock and together again,
Accept my bed, or narrow or wide,
And flee from folly on every side
With a lover's pain to attain the plain
Far from the hills of Habersham,
Far from the valleys of Hall.

All down the hills of Habersham,
All through the valleys of Hall,
The rushes cried *Abide, abide*,
The willful waterweeds held me thrall,
The laving laurel turned my tide,
The ferns and the fondling grass said *Stay*,
The dewberry dipped for to work delay,
And the little reeds sighed *Abide, abide*,
Here in the hills of Habersham,
Here in the valleys of Hall.

High o'er the hills of Habersham,
Veiling the valleys of Hall,
The hickory told me manifold
Fair tales of shade, the poplar tall
Wrought me her shadowy self to hold,
The chestnut, the oak, the walnut, the pine,
Overleaning, with flickering meaning and sign,
Said, *Pass not, so cold, these manifold*
Deep shades of the hills of Habersham,
These glades in the valleys of Hall.

And oft in the hills of Habersham,
And oft in the valleys of Hall,
The white quartz shone, and the smooth brook-stone
Did bar me of passage with friendly brawl,
And many a luminous jewel lone
— Crystals clear or acloud with mist,
Ruby, garnet and amethyst —
Made lures with the lights of streaming stone
In the clefts of the hills of Habersham,
In the beds of the valleys of Hall.

But oh, not the hills of Habersham,
And oh, not the valleys of Hall
Avail: I am fain for to water the plain.
Downward the voices of Duty call —
Downward, to toil and be mixed with the main,
The dry fields burn, and the mills are to turn,
And a myriad flowers mortally yearn,
And the lordly main from beyond the plain
Calls o'er the hills of Habersham,
Calls through the valleys of Hall.

FROM "THE MARSHES OF GLYNN"

As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest on the greatness of God:
I will fly in the greatness of God as the marsh-hen flies
In the freedom that fills all the space 'twixt the marsh and
the skies:

By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends in the sod
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of God:
Oh, like to the greatness of God is the greatness within
The range of the marshes, the liberal marshes of Glynn.

And the sea lends large, as the marsh: lo, out of his plenty
the sea

Pours fast: full soon the time of the flood-tide must be:
Look how the grace of the sea doth go

About and about through the intricate channels that flow
Here and there,

Everywhere,

Till his waters have flooded the uttermost creeks and the
low-lying lanes,

And the marsh is meshed with a million veins,
That like as with rosy and silvery essences flow
In the rose-and-silver evening glow.

Farewell, my lord Sun!

The creeks overflow: a thousand rivulets run

'Twixt the roots of the sod; the blades of the marsh-grass
stir;

Passeth a hurrying sound of wings that westward whirr;

Passeth, and all is still; and the currents cease to run;

And the sea and the marsh are one.

CHARLES EDWARD CARRYL

Charles Edward Carryl, father of the gifted Guy Wetmore Carryl (see page 94), was born in New York City, December 30, 1842. He was an officer and director in various railroads, but found leisure to write two of the worthy rivals of the immortal *Alice in Wonderland*. These two, *Davy and the Goblin* (1884), and *The Admiral's Caravan* (1891), contain many lively and diverting ballads as well as inspired nonsense verses in the manner of their famous model.

Upon retiring from business, Carryl moved to Boston and lived there until his death, which occurred in the summer of 1920.

ROBINSON CRUSOE'S STORY

The night was thick and hazy
When the "Piccadilly Daisy"
Carried down the crew and captain in the sea;
And I think the water drowned 'em
For they never, never found 'em
And I know they didn't come ashore with me.

Oh! 'twas very sad and lonely
When I found myself the only

Population on this cultivated shore;
But I've made a little tavern
In a rocky little cavern,
And I sit and watch for people at the door.

I spent no time in looking
For a girl to do my cooking,
As I'm quite a clever hand at making stews;
But I had that fellow Friday,
Just to keep the tavern tidy,
And to put a Sunday polish on my shoes.

I have a little garden
That I'm cultivating lard in,
As the things I eat are rather tough and dry;
For I live on toasted lizards,
Prickly pears, and parrot gizzards,
And I'm really very fond of beetle-pie.

The clothes I had were furry,
And it made me fret and worry
When I found the moths were eating off the hair;
And I had to scrape and sand 'em
And I boiled 'em and I tanned 'em,
Till I got the fine morocco suit I wear.

I sometimes seek diversion
In a family excursion
With the few domestic animals you see;
And we take along a carrot
As refreshment for the parrot
And a little can of jungleberry tea.

Then we gather as we travel,
Bits of moss and dirty gravel,
And we chip off little specimens of stone;
And we carry home as prizes
Funny bugs, of handy sizes,
Just to give the day a scientific tone.

If the roads are wet and muddy
We remain at home and study, —
For the Goat is very clever at a sum, —
And the Dog, instead of fighting,
Studies ornamental writing,
While the Cat is taking lessons on the drum.

We retire at eleven,
And we rise again at seven;
And I wish to call attention, as I close,
To the fact that all the scholars
Are correct about their collars,
And particular in turning out their toes.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

James Whitcomb Riley, possibly the most widely read native poet of his day, was born October 7, 1849, in Greenfield, Indiana, twenty miles from Indianapolis, where he spent his later years and died July 22, 1916. Riley was not, as may be inferred from his bucolic poems, a struggling child of the soil. His father was a lawyer in comfortable circumstances, and Riley was given a good education and prepared for the law. However, his temperament was restless; it made him try sign-painting, circus advertising, journalism.

In 1882, when he was on the staff of the *Indianapolis Journal*, he began the series of dialect poems which he claimed were by a rude and unlettered farmer, one "Benj. F. Johnson, of Boone, the Hoosier poet" — printing long extracts from "Johnson's" ungrammatical and badly-spelt letters to prove his "find." A collection of these rustic verses appeared, in 1883, as *The Ole Swimmin' Hole*; and Riley leaped into widespread popularity. Other collections followed rapidly: *Afterwhiles* (1887), *Old-Fashioned Roses* (1888), *Rhymes of Childhood* (1890). All met an instant response; Riley endeared himself, by his homely idiom and his ingenuity, to a countryful of readers, adolescent and adult.

Riley's simplicity is not always as artless as it seems. Time and again, one can see him trading on the emotions of his readers. He is the poet of sentiment rather than of convictions, of philosophies that never disturb, of sweet truisms rather than searching truths.

That work of his which may endure will survive because of the

personal flavor that Riley often poured into it. Such poems as "When the Frost is on the Punkin" and "The Raggedy Man" are a part of American folk literature; "Little Orphant Annie" is read wherever there is a schoolhouse or, for that matter, a nursery.

"WHEN THE FROST IS ON THE PUNKIN"

When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock,
And you hear the kyouck and gobble of the struttin' turkey-
cock,

And the clackin' of the guineys, and the cluckin' of the hens,
And the rooster's hallylooyer as he tiptoes on the fence;

O, it's then the time a feller is a-feelin' at his best,
With the risin' sun to greet him from a night of peaceful rest,
As he leaves the house, bareheaded, and goes out to feed the
stock,

When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

They's something kindo' harty-like about the atmufere
When the heat of summer's over and the coolin' fall is here —
Of course we miss the flowers, and the blossoms on the trees,
And the mumble of the hummin'-birds and buzzin' of the
bees;

But the air's so appetizin'; and the landscape through the
haze

Of a crisp and sunny morning of the airly autumn days
Is a pictur' that no painter has the colorin' to mock —
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

The husky, rusty russel of the tassels of the corn,
And the raspin' of the tangled leaves as golden as the morn;
The stubble in the furries — kind o' lonesome-like, but still
A-preachin' sermons to us of the barns they grewed to fill;
The strawstack in the medder, and the reaper in the shed;
The hosses in theyr stalls below — the clover overhead! —
O, it sets my heart a-clickin' like the tickin' of a clock
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

Then your apples all is gethered, and the ones a feller keeps
Is poured around the cellar-floor in red and yaller heaps;
And your cider-makin's over, and your wimmern-folks is
through

With theyr mince and apple-butter, and theyr souse and sausage too! . . .

I don't know how to tell it — but ef such a thing could be
As the angels wantin' boardin', and they'd call around on
me —

I'd want to 'commodate 'em — all the whole-indurin' flock —
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

A PARTING GUEST

What delightful hosts are they —
Life and Love!

Lingeringly I turn away,
This late hour, yet glad enough
They have not withheld from me
Their high hospitality.

So, with face lit with delight
And all gratitude, I stay

Yet to press their hands and say,
"Thanks. — So fine a time! Good night."

EUGENE FIELD

Born in St. Louis, Missouri, September 3, 1850, Eugene Field belongs to the literature of the West. Colorado and the Rocky Mountain region claimed him as their own and Field never repudiated the allegiance. Field's area of education embraced New England, Missouri, and what European territory he could cover in six months. At twenty-three he became a reporter on the St. Louis *Evening Journal*, and devoted the rest of his life to journalism.

Though Field may be overrated in some quarters, there is little doubt that certain of his child lyrics, his homely philosophic ballads, and his brilliant burlesques will occupy a niche in American letters. Readers of all tastes will find much to delight them in the complete one-volume edition of his verse which was issued in 1910. Field died in Chicago, Illinois, November 4, 1895.

LITTLE BOY BLUE

The little toy dog is covered with dust,
But sturdy and stanch he stands;
The little toy soldier is red with rust,
And his musket molds in his hands.
Time was when the little toy dog was new,
And the soldier was passing fair;
And that was the time when our Little Boy Blue
Kissed them and put them there.

"Now don't you go till I come," he said,
"And don't you make any noise!"
So, toddling off to his trundle bed,
He dreamt of the pretty toys;
And, as he was dreaming, an angel song
Awakened our Little Boy Blue —
Oh! the years are many, the years are long,
But the little toy friends are true!

Ay, faithful to Little Boy Blue they stand,
Each in the same old place,
Awaiting the touch of a little hand,
The smile of a little face;
And they wonder, as waiting the long years through
In the dust of that little chair,
What has become of our Little Boy Blue,
Since he kissed them and put them there.

SEEIN' THINGS

I ain't afraid uv snakes or toads, or bugs or worms or mice,
An' things 'at girls are skeered uv I think are awful nice!
I'm pretty brave I guess; an' yet I hate to go to bed,
For, when I'm tucked up warm an' snug an' when my prayers
are said,
Mother tells me "Happy Dreams" an' takes away the light,
An' leaves me lyin' all alone an' seein' things at night!

Sometimes they're in the corner, sometimes they're by the
door,
Sometimes they're all a-standin' in the middle uv the floor;
Sometimes they are a-sittin' down, sometimes they're walkin'
round
So softly and so creepy-like they never make a sound!
Sometimes they are as black as ink, an' other times they're
white —
But color ain't no difference when you see things at night!

Once, when I licked a feller 'at had just moved on our street,
An' father sent me up to bed without a bite to eat,
I woke up in the dark an' saw things standin' in a row,
A-lookin' at me cross-eyed an' p'intin' at me — *so!*
Oh, my! I wuz so skeered 'at time I never slep' a mite —
It's almost alluz when I'm bad I see things at night!

Lucky thing I ain't a girl or I'd be skeered to death!
Bein' I'm a boy, I duck my head an' hold my breath.
An' I am, oh *so* sorry I'm a naughty boy, an' then
I promise to be better an' I say my prayers again!
Gran'ma tells me that's the only way to make it right
When a feller has been wicked an' sees things at night!

An' so when other naughty boys would coax me into sin,
I try to skwush the Tempter's voice 'at urges me within;
An' when they's pie for supper, or cakes 'at's big an' nice,
I want to — but I do not pass my plate f'r them things twice!
No, ruther let Starvation wipe me slowly out o' sight
Then I should keep a-livin' on an' seein' things at night!

EDWIN MARKHAM

Edwin Markham was born in Oregon City, Oregon, April 23, 1852, the youngest son of pioneer parents. His father died before the boy reached his fifth year and in 1857 he was taken by his mother to a wild valley in the Suisun Hills in central California. Here he grew to young manhood; farming, broncho-riding, laboring on a

cattle ranch, educating himself in the primitive country schools and supplementing his studies with whatever books he could procure.

In 1899, a new force surged through him; a sense of outrage at the inequality of human struggle voiced itself in the sweeping and sonorous poem, "The Man with the Hoe." (See Preface.) Inspired by Millet's painting, Markham made the bowed, broken French peasant a symbol of the poverty-stricken toiler in all lands — his was a protest not against labor but the drudgery, the soul-destroying exploitation of labor.

The success of the poem upon its appearance in the *San Francisco Examiner* (January 15, 1899) was instantaneous and universal. Soon it appeared in every part of the globe; it was quoted and copied in every walk of life, in the literary world, the leisure world, the labor world. It was incorporated in Markham's first volume *The Man with the Hoe and Other Poems* (1899).

The same passion that fired Markham to champion the great common workers equipped him to write fittingly of the Great Commoner in *Lincoln, and Other Poems* (1901). In 1928, he published *The Book of Poetry*, an assemblage of eight hundred poets of all times and countries; two crammed volumes which he is said to have been collecting, compiling, and studying for sixty years.

Markham's other volumes are less distinctive, although none is without his humanitarian spirit. Never reaching the greatest heights, there are accents of dignity in *The Shoes of Happiness* (1914), *The Gates of Paradise* (1920), and *New Poems: Eighty Songs at Eighty* (1932), published with a nice appropriateness on the poet's eightieth birthday. Many of the quatrains are memorable epigrams.

Markham came East in 1901, where he has lived ever since, making his home on Staten Island, New York, compiling and lecturing.

BROTHERHOOD

The crest and crowning of all good,
Life's final star, is Brotherhood;
For it will bring again to Earth
Her long-lost Poesy and Mirth;
Will send new light on every face,
A kingly power upon the race.
And till it come, we men are slaves,
And travel downward to the dust of graves.
Come, clear the way, then, clear the way;
Blind creeds and kings have had their day;

Break the dead branches from the path;
Our hope is in the aftermath —
Our hope is in heroic men
Star-led to build the world again.
Make way for Brotherhood — make way for Man!

OUTWITTED

He drew a circle that shut me out —
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in!

THE MAN WITH THE HOE

(Written after seeing Millet's world-famous painting)

Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages in his face,
And on his back the burden of the world.
Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?
Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?
Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?
Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?

Is this the Thing the Lord God made and gave
To have dominion over sea and land;
To trace the stars and search the heavens for power;
To feel the passion of Eternity?
Is this the dream He dreamed who shaped the suns
And marked their ways upon the ancient deep?
Down all the caverns of Hell to their last gulf
There is no shape more terrible than this —
More tongued with censure of the world's blind greed —
More filled with signs and portents for the soul —
More packt with danger to the universe.

What gulfs between him and the seraphim!
Slave of the wheel of labor, what to him
Are Plato and the swing of Pleiades?
What the long reaches of the peaks of song,
The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?
Through this dread shape the suffering ages look;
Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop;
Through this dread shape humanity betrayed,
Plundered, profaned, and disinherited,
Cries protest to the Judges of the World,
A protest that is also prophecy.

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
Is this the handiwork you give to God,
This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quenched?
How will you ever straighten up this shape;
Touch it again with immortality;
Give back the upward looking and the light;
Rebuild in it the music and the dream;
Make right the immemorial infamies,
Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
How will the Future reckon with this man?
How answer his brute question in that hour
When whirlwinds of rebellion shake all shores?
How will it be with kingdoms and with kings —
With those who shaped him to the thing he is —
When this dumb terror shall rise to judge the world,
After the silence of the centuries?

THE AVENGERS

The laws are the secret avengers,
And they rule above all lands;
They come on wool-soft sandals,
But they strike with iron hands.

PREPAREDNESS

For all your days prepare,
And meet them ever alike:
When you are the anvil, bear —
When you are the hammer, strike.

LINCOLN, THE MAN OF THE PEOPLE

When the Norn Mother saw the Whirlwind Hour
Greatening and darkening as it hurried on,
She left the Heaven of Heroes and came down
To make a man to meet the mortal need.
She took the tried clay of the common road —
Clay warm yet with the genial heat of earth,
Dasht through it all a strain of prophecy;
Tempered the heap with thrill of human tears;
Then mixt a laughter with the serious stuff.
Into the shape she breathed a flame to light
That tender, tragic, ever-changing face;
And laid on him a sense of mystic powers,
Moving — all husht — behind the mortal veil.
Here was a man to hold against the world,
A man to match the mountains and the sea.

The color of the ground was in him, the red earth;
The smack and tang of elemental things:
The rectitude and patience of the cliff;
The good-will of the rain that loves all leaves;
The friendly welcome of the wayside well;
The courage of the bird that dares the sea;
The gladness of the wind that shakes the corn;
The pity of the snow that hides all scars;
The secrecy of streams that make their way
Under the mountain to the rifted rock;
The tolerance and equity of light
That gives as freely to the shrinking flower
As to the great oak flaring to the wind —
To the grave's low hill as to the Matterhorn

That shoulders out the sky. Sprung from the West,
He drank the valorous youth of a new world.
The strength of virgin forests braced his mind,
The hush of spacious prairies stilled his soul.
His words were oaks in acorns; and his thoughts
Were roots that firmly gript the granite truth.

Up from log cabin to the Capitol,
One fire was on his spirit, one resolve —
To send the keen ax to the root of wrong,
Clearing a free way for the feet of God,
The eyes of conscience testing every stroke,
To make his deed the measure of a man.
He built the rail-pile as he built the State,
Pouring his splendid strength through every blow;
The grip that swung the ax in Illinois
Was on the pen that set a people free.

So came the Captain with the mighty heart;
And when the judgment thunders split the house,
Wrenching the rafters from their ancient rest,
He held the ridgepole up, and spiked again
The rafters of the Home. He held his place —
Held the long purpose like a growing tree —
Held on through blame and faltered not at praise.
And when he fell in whirlwind, he went down
As when a lordly cedar, green with boughs,
Goes down with a great shout upon the hills,
And leaves a lonesome place against the sky.

LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE

Lizette Woodworth Reese was born January 9, 1856, near Baltimore, Maryland, where she lived until she died, December 17, 1935, a few weeks before her eightieth birthday. She was educated chiefly in private schools, and taught English in the Western High School at Baltimore. In 1923 the alumni of the High School where she had taught more than a score of years presented the school with a bronze

tablet inscribed with her sonnet "Tears," which had become one of the most famous of American poems.

A Handful of Lavender (1891), *A Quiet Road* (1896) and *A Wayside Lute* (1909) establish an artistry which, for all its seemingly old-fashioned elegance, is as spontaneous as it is skillful. Here are no verbal tricks, no false postures; here are the qualities which are never dependent on literary fashion. "This poetry of hers," writes Mary Colum, "will persist, not because the author was cleverer or more original than other writers, but because in some way her nerves were more subtle in response to the kinds of life and experiences that came her way."

From 1909 to 1920 there was a silence. Suddenly her work appeared again, keener than ever. *Spicewood* was published in 1920, *Wild Cherry* in 1923. Both volumes, as well as the still more recent verses in her *Selected Poems* (1926) are full of the same things which always held Miss Reese. Again and again she writes of lilacs in Old York Lane, of thorn trees and blackberry rain, of judas-blossoms and daffodils, of Spring ecstasy and lost love, of a dead lady in her garden and Mary at the manger. But there is always something which makes the very repetitions take on a light which is fresh and clear. At least a dozen of her brief songs and lyrical sonnets will find a life beyond the patterns of the day.

TEARS

When I consider Life and its few years —
A wisp of fog betwixt us and the sun;
A call to battle, and the battle done
Ere the last echo dies within our ears;
A rose choked in the grass; an hour of fears;
The gusts that past a darkening shore do beat;
The burst of music down an unlistening street, —
I wonder at the idleness of tears.

Ye old, old dead, and ye of yesternight,
Chieftains, and bards, and keepers of the sheep,
By every cup of sorrow that you had,
Loose me from tears, and make me see aright
How each hath back what once he stayed to weep:
Homer his sight, David his little lad!

SPICEWOOD

The spicewood burns along the gray, spent sky,
In moist unchimneyed places, in a wind,
That whips it all before, and all behind,
Into one thick, rude flame, now low, now high.
It is the first, the homeliest thing of all —
At sight of it, that lad that by it fares,
Whistles afresh his foolish, town-caught airs —
A thing so honey-colored and so tall!

It is as though the young Year, ere he pass,
To the white riot of the cherry tree,
Would fain accustom us, or here, or there,
To his new sudden ways with bough and grass,
So starts with what is humble, plain to see,
And all familiar as a cup, a chair.

A FLOWER OF MULLEIN

I am too near, too clear a thing for you,
A flower of mullein in a crack of wall,
The villagers half see, or not at all;
Part of the weather, like the wind or dew.
You love to pluck the different, and find
Stuff for your joy in cloudy loveliness;
You love to fumble at a door, and guess
At some strange happening that may wait behind.

Yet life is full of tricks, and it is plain,
That men drift back to some worn field or roof,
To grip at comfort in a room, a stair;
To warm themselves at some flower down a lane:
You, too, may long, grown tired of the aloof,
For the sweet surety of the common air.

MIRACLE

Who is in love with loveliness,
Need not shake with cold;

For he may tear a star in two,
And frock himself in gold.

Who holds her first within his heart,
In certain favor goes;
If his roof tumbles, he may find
Harbor in a rose.

WILD CHERRY

Why make your lodging here in this spent lane,
Where but an old man, with his sheep each day,
Twice through the forgotten grass goes by your way,
Half sees you there, and not once looks again?
For you are of the very ribs of spring,
And should have many lovers, who have none.
In silver cloaks, in hushed troops down the sun
Should they draw near, oh, strange and lovely thing!
Beauty has no set weather, no sure place;
Her careful pageantries are here as there,
With nothing lost. And soon, some lad may start —
A strayed Mayer in this unremembered space —
At your tall white, and know you very fair,
Let all else go to roof within your heart.

OWNERSHIP

Love not a loveliness too much,
For it may turn and clutch you so,
That you be less than any serf,
And at its nodding go.

Be master; otherwise you grow
Too small, too humble, like to one
Long dispossessed, who stares through tears
At his lost house across the sun.

Wild carrot in an old field here,
Or steeple choked with music there,

LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE

Possess, as part of what is yours;
Thus prove yourself the heir.

Your barony is sky and land,
From morning's start to the night's close;
Bend to your need Orion's hounds,
Or the small fagot of a rose.

THE DUST

The dust blows up and down
Within the lonely town;
Vague, hurrying, dumb, aloof,
On sill and bough and roof.

What cloudy shapes do fleet
Along the parched street;
Clerks, bishops, kings go by —
Tomorrow so shall I.

BLISS CARMAN

(William) Bliss Carman was born at Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada, April 15, 1861, of a long line of United Empire Loyalists who withdrew from Connecticut at the time of the Revolutionary War. Carman was educated at the University of New Brunswick (1879-81), at Edinburgh (1882-83) and Harvard (1886-88). He took up his residence in the United States about 1889 and lived there until his death in Connecticut in 1929.

In 1893, Carman issued his first book, *Low Tide on Grand Pré: A Book of Lyrics*. It was immediately successful, running quickly into a second edition. A vivid buoyancy, new to American literature, made his worship of Nature frankly pagan as contrasted to the moralizing tributes of most of his predecessors. This freshness and irresponsible whimsy made Carman the natural collaborator for Richard Hovey, and when their first joint *Songs from Vagabondia* appeared in 1894, Carman's fame was established. (See Preface.)

Although the *Vagabondia* collections contain Carman's best poems, several of his other volumes (he published more than twenty) vibrate with a glowing pulse. A happy radiance rises from *Ballads of Lost Haven* (1897), *From the Book of Myths* (1902), *Songs of the Sea Children* (1904), and *Wild Garden* (1929).

A VAGABOND SONG

There is something in the autumn that is native to my
blood —
Touch of manner, hint of mood;
And my heart is like a rhyme,
With the yellow and the purple and the crimson keeping
time.

The scarlet of the maples can shake me like a cry
Of bugles going by.
And my lonely spirit thrills
To see the frosty asters like a smoke upon the hills.

There is something in October sets the gypsy blood astir;
We must rise and follow her,
When from every hill of flame
She calls and calls each vagabond by name.

HEM AND HAW

Hem and Haw were the sons of sin,
Created to shally and shirk;
Hem lay 'round and Haw looked on
While God did all the work.

Hem was a foggy, and Haw was a prig,
For both had the dull, dull mind;
And whenever they found a thing to do,
They yammered and went it blind.

Hem was the father of bigots and bores;
As the sands of the sea were they.

And Haw was the father of all the tribe
Who criticize today.

But God was an artist from the first,
And knew what he was about;
While over his shoulder sneered these two,
And advised him to rub it out.

They prophesied ruin ere man was made;
"Such folly must surely fail!"
And when he was done, "Do you think, my Lord,
He's better without a tail?"

And still in the honest working world,
With posture and hint and smirk,
These sons of the devil are standing by
While man does all the work.

They balk endeavor and baffle reform,
In the sacred name of law;
And over the quavering voice of Hem
Is the droning voice of Haw.

DAISIES

Over the shoulders and slopes of the dune
I saw the white daisies go down to the sea,
A host in the sunshine, an army in June,
The people God sends us to set our hearts free.

The bobolinks rallied them up from the dell,
The orioles whistled them out of the wood;
And all of their singing was, "Earth, it is well!"
And all of their dancing was, "Life, thou art good!"

Richard Hovey was born May 4, 1864, at Normal, Illinois, and graduated from Dartmouth in 1885. After leaving college, he became, in rapid succession, a theologian, an actor, a journalist, a lecturer, professor of literature at Barnard, a poet and a dramatist.

His exuberance found its outlet in the series of lusty poems published in collaboration with Bliss Carman — the three volumes of *Songs from Vagabondia* (1894, 1896, 1900). Here he let himself go completely. His lines sling themselves across the page; shout with a wild irresponsibility; leap, laugh, carouse and carry off the reader in a gale of high spirits. His energy is continuous and compelling.

"At the Crossroads" is a vivid example of this gipsy-like spirit which could sound deeper notes with equal strength. The famous "Stein Song" is but an interlude in the midst of a far finer poem that begins:

I said in my heart, "I am sick of four walls and a ceiling.
I have need of the sky.
I have business with the grass.
I will up and get me away where the hawk is wheeling,
Lone and high,
And the slow clouds go by. . . ."

Although the varied lyrics in *Songs from Vagabondia* are the best-known examples of Hovey, a representative collection of his riper work may be found in *Along the Trail* (1898). Hovey was slow to mature; this volume, in conjunction with the uncompleted *Taliesin: A Masque*, shows his later, more intensive power. He died in New York, February 24, 1900.

AT THE CROSSROADS

You to the left and I to the right,
For the ways of men must sever —
And it well may be for a day and a night,
And it well may be forever.
But whether we meet or whether we part
(For our ways are past our knowing),
A pledge from the heart to its fellow heart
On the ways we all are going!
Here's luck!
For we know not where we are going.

Whether we win or whether we lose
With the hands that life is dealing,
It is not we nor the ways we choose
But the fall of the cards that's sealing.
There's a fate in love and a fate in fight,
And the best of us all go under —
And whether we're wrong or whether we're right,
We win, sometimes, to our wonder.
Here's luck!
That we may not yet go under!

With a steady swing and an open brow
We have tramped the ways together,
But we're clasping hands at the crossroads now
In the Fiend's ¹ own night for weather;
And whether we bleed or whether we smile
In the leagues that lie before us
The ways of life are many a mile
And the dark of Fate is o'er us.
Here's luck!
And a cheer for the dark before us!

You to the left and I to the right,
For the ways of men must sever,
And it well may be for a day and a night
And it well may be forever!
But whether we live or whether we die
(For the end is past our knowing),
Here's two frank hearts and the open sky,
Be a fair or an ill wind blowing!
Here's luck!
In the teeth of all winds blowing.

¹ The Fiend is Satan, man's chief enemy.

UNMANIFEST DESTINY¹

To what new fates, my country, far
And unforeseen of foe or friend,
Beneath what unexpected star
Compelled to what unchosen end,

Across the sea that knows no beach,
The Admiral of Nations guides
Thy blind obedient keels to reach
The harbor where thy future rides!

The guns that spoke at Lexington
Knew not that God was planning then
The trumpet word of Jefferson
To bugle forth the rights of men.

To them that wept and cursed Bull Run,
What was it but despair and shame?
Who saw behind the cloud the sun?
Who knew that God was in the flame?

Had not defeat upon defeat,
Disaster on disaster come,
The slave's emancipated feet
Had never marched behind the drum.

There is a Hand that bends our deeds
To mightier issues than we planned;
Each son that triumphs, each that bleeds,
My country, serves It's dark command.

¹ The phrase "manifest destiny" came into ordinary usage during the Spanish-American War. It indicated America's paternal (or, as the opposing faction claimed, imperialistic) mission. Hovey was among those who denied any selfish motives to his country.

I do not know beneath what sky
Nor on what seas shall be thy fate;
I only know it shall be high,
I only know it shall be great.

A STEIN SONG

Give a rouse, then, in the Maytime
For a life that knows no fear!
Turn night-time into daytime
With the sunlight of good cheer!
For it's always fair weather
When good fellows get together,
With a stein on the table and a good song ringing clear.

When the wind comes up from Cuba,
And the birds are on the wing,
And our hearts are patting juba
To the banjo of the spring,
Then it's no wonder whether
The boys will get together,
With a stein on the table and a cheer for everything.

For we're all frank-and-twenty
When the spring is in the air;
And we've faith and hope a-plenty,
And we've life and love to spare:
And it's birds of a feather
When we all get together,
With a stein on the table and a heart without a care.

For we know the world is glorious,
And the goal a golden thing,
And that God is not censorious
When his children have their fling;
And life slips its tether
When the boys get together,
With a stein on the table in the fellowship of spring.

William Vaughn Moody was born at Spencer, Indiana, July 1, 1869, and was educated at Harvard. After graduation, he spent the remaining eighteen years of his life in travel and teaching; his death came at the height of his creative power.

The Masque of Judgment, his first work, was published in 1900. A more representative collection appeared the year following; in *Poems* (1901) Moody effected a mingling of challenging lyricism and spiritual philosophy. Throughout his career, particularly in such lines as "On a Soldier Fallen in the Philippines," Moody successfully achieved the rare union of poet and preacher. Two prose plays, *The Great Divide* (1907) and *The Faith Healer* (1909), continued his fusion of "dream and unaccountable desire." A complete edition of *The Poems and Poetic Dramas of William Vaughn Moody* was published in 1912 in two volumes.

In the summer of 1909 Moody was stricken with the illness from which he never recovered. He died in October, 1910.

ON A SOLDIER FALLEN IN THE PHILIPPINES

Streets of the roaring town,
Hush for him; hush, be still!
He comes, who was stricken down
Doing the word of our will.
Hush! Let him have his state.
Give him his soldier's crown,
The grists of trade can wait
Their grinding at the mill.

But he cannot wait for his honor, now the trumpet has been
blown.

Wreath pride now for his granite brow, lay love on his
breast of stone.

Toll! Let the great bells toll
Till the clashing air is dim,
Did we wrong this parted soul?
We will make it up to him.
Toll! Let him never guess
What work we sent him to.
Laurel, laurel, yes.
He did what we bade him do.

Praise, and never a whispered hint but the fight he fought
was good;
Never a word that the blood on his sword was his country's
own heart's blood.

A flag for a soldier's bier
Who dies that his land may live;
O banners, banners here,
That he doubt not nor misgive!
That he heed not from the tomb
The evil days draw near
When the nation robed in gloom
With its faithless past shall strive.

Let him never dream that his bullet's scream went wide of
its island mark,
Home to the heart of his darling land where she stumbled
and sinned in the dark.

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

Edwin Arlington Robinson was born December 22, 1869, in the village of Head Tide, Maine. When he was still a child, the Robinson family moved to the nearby town of Gardiner, which figures in Robinson's poetry as "Tilbury Town." In 1891 he entered Harvard College, but left in 1893. A little collection of verse (*The Torrent and the Night Before*) was privately printed in 1896 and the following year marked the appearance of Robinson's first representative work, *The Children of the Night* (1897).

Somewhat later, Robinson was struggling in various capacities to make a living in New York, five years passing before the publication of *Captain Craig* (1902). This richly detailed narrative, recalling Browning's method, increased Robinson's audience. His work was brought to the attention of President Theodore Roosevelt, who, a few years later, offered him a place in the New York Customs House. In 1910, he published a series of short poems, *The Town Down the River. The Man Against the Sky*, Robinson's fullest and most penetrating work, appeared in 1916.

In all of these books there is a searching for truth, a constant questioning, which takes the place of mere acceptance. As the work

of a portrait painter, nothing, with the exception of some of Frost's pictures, has been produced that is at once so keen and so kindly. In etchings like "Miniver Cheevy," "Bewick Finzer," and "Richard Cory" — lines where Robinson's irony is inextricably mixed with tenderness — his art is at its height. "The Master," one of the finest evocations of Lincoln, is, at the same time, a bitter commentary on the commercialism of the times and the "shopman's test of age and worth." In his reanimations of the Artburian legends, *Merlin* (1917) and *Launcelot* (1920), differing radically from the idyls of Tennyson, Robinson colored the tale with somber reflections of the collapse of old orders, the darkness of an age in ashes.

Avon's Harvest, which the author called "a dime novel in verse," appeared in 1921. In the same year his first *Collected Poems* received the Pulitzer Prize. *Roman Bartholow* (1923) is a single poem of almost two hundred pages; a dramatic and introspective narrative in blank verse. *The Man Who Died Twice* (1924), which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for that year, is likewise one long poem: a tale which is a cross between a grotesque recital and inspired metaphysics. The mixture is one of Robinson's greatest triumphs; none of his portraits, either miniatures or full-length canvases, has given us a profounder insight of a tortured soul than this of Fernando Nash, "the king who lost his crown before he had it." *Dionysus in Doubt* (1925) contains, besides several characteristic extended poems, a dozen of Robinson's finest dramatic sonnets. *Tristram* (1927) vividly modernizes the immortal love-story and moves with an emotional warmth that is unusual in Robinson.

After 1928 Robinson wrote too rapidly; each year for seven years he planned a long narrative poem, works which declined in strength and substance. *Cavender's House* (1929) was esteemed for its modernity, but mental dryness as well as physical fatigue shows in such later book-length poems as *The Glory of the Nightingales* (1930), *Matthias at the Door* (1931), *Amaranth* (1934), and the posthumous *King Jasper* (1935), which carried a shrewd and sympathetic introduction by Robert Frost. A new and comprehensive *Collected Poems*, running to almost 1500 pages, was published in 1937.

From 1911 until his death Robinson spent most of his time at the MacDowell Colony at Peterborough, New Hampshire, wintering in New York and Boston. Early in 1935 his illness, which he had concealed from his friends, made it necessary for him to be taken to the New York Hospital. He was operated upon unsuccessfully, and died there April 6, 1935.

Critics and poets of all schools joined in praising Robinson. All admired him for his reticence and integrity, for the dignity with which he carried his fame and, as Robinson Jeffers wrote, "followed

his own sense of direction, unbewildered and undiverted." His work as a whole challenged those who accused him of holding a negative attitude; it showed a stubborn philosophy, a dogged desire for a deeper faith, a greater light.

MINIVER CHEEVY

Miniver Cheevy, child of scorn,
Grew lean while he assailed the seasons;
He wept that he was ever born,
And he had reasons.

Miniver loved the days of old
When swords were bright and steeds were prancing;
The vision of a warrior bold
Would set him dancing.

Miniver sighed for what was not,
And dreamed, and rested from his labors;
He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot,
And Priam's neighbors.

Miniver mourned the ripe renown
That made so many a name so fragrant;
He mourned Romance, now on the town,
And Art, a vagrant.

Miniver loved the Medici,
Albeit he had never seen one;
He would have sinned incessantly
Could he have been one.

Miniver cursed the commonplace
And eyed a khaki suit with loathing;
He missed the medieval grace
Of iron clothing.

Miniver scorned the gold he sought,
But sore annoyed was he without it;

Miniver thought, and thought, and thought,
And thought about it.

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,
Scratched his head and kept on thinking;
Miniver coughed, and called it fate,
And kept on drinking.

THE MASTER

*(Lincoln as seen, presumably, by one of his contemporaries shortly
after the Civil War)*

A flying word from here and there
Had sown the name at which we sneered,
But soon the name was everywhere,
To be reviled and then revered:
A presence to be loved and feared,
We cannot hide it, or deny
That we, the gentlemen who jeered,
May be forgotten by and by.

He came when days were perilous
And hearts of men were sore beguiled;
And having made his note of us,
He pondered and was reconciled.
Was ever master yet so mild
As he, and so untamable?
We doubted, even when he smiled,
Not knowing what he knew so well.

He knew that undeceiving fate
Would shame us whom he served unsought;
He knew that he must wince and wait —
The jest of those for whom he fought;
He knew devoutly what he thought
Of us and of our ridicule;
He knew that we must all be taught
Like little children in a school.

We gave a glamour to the task
That he encountered and saw through,
But little of us did he ask,
And little did we ever do.
And what appears if we review
The season when we railed and chaffed?
It is the face of one who knew
That we were learning while we laughed.

The face that in our vision feels
Again the venom that we flung,
Transfigured to the world reveals
The vigilance to which we clung.
Shrewd, hallowed, harassed, and among
The mysteries that are untold,
The face we see was never young,
Nor could it ever have been old.

For he, to whom we have applied
Our shopman's test of age and worth,
Was elemental when he died,
As he was ancient at his birth:
The saddest among kings of earth,
Bowed with a galling crown, this man
Met rancor with a cryptic mirth,
Laconic — and Olympian.

The love, the grandeur, and the fame
Are bounded by the world alone;
The calm, the smoldering, and the flame
Of awful patience were his own:
With him they are forever flown
Past all our fond self-shadowings,
Wherewith we cumber the Unknown
As with inept Icarian wings.

For we were not as other men:
'Twas ours to soar and his to see.
But we are coming down again,
And we shall come down pleasantly;

Nor shall we longer disagree
On what is to be sublime,
But flourish in our perigee
And have one Titan at a time.

AN OLD STORY

Strange that I did not know him then,
That friend of mine!
I did not even show him then
One friendly sign;

But cursed him for the ways he had
To make me see
My envy of the praise he had
For praising me.

I would have rid the earth of him
Once, in my pride! . . .
I never knew the worth of him
Until he died.

THE DARK HILLS

Dark hills at evening in the west,
Where sunset hovers like a sound
Of golden horns that sang to rest
Old bones of warriors under ground,
Far now from all the bannered ways
Where flash the legions of the sun,
You fade — as if the last of days
Were fading, and all wars were done.

RICHARD CORY

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
"Good morning," and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich — yes, richer than a king,
And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head.

CLIFF KLINGENHAGEN

Cliff Klingenhagen had me in to dine
With him one day; and after soup and meat,
And all the other things there were to eat,
Cliff took two glasses and filled one with wine
And one with wormwood. Then, without a sign
For me to choose at all, he took the draught
Of bitterness himself, and lightly quaffed
It off, and said the other one was mine.

And when I asked him what the deuce he meant
By doing that, he only looked at me
And grinned, and said it was a way of his.
And though I know the fellow, I have spent
Long time a-wondering when I shall be
As happy as Cliff Klingenhagen is.

BEWICK FINZER

Time was when his half million drew
The breath of six per cent;
But soon the worm of what-was-not
Fed hard on his content;

And something crumbled in his brain
When his half million went.

Time passed, and filled along with his
The place of many more;
Time came, and hardly one of us
Had credence to restore,
From what appeared one day, the man
Whom we had known before.

The broken voice, the withered neck,
The coat worn out with care,
The cleanliness of indigence,
The brilliance of despair,
The fond imponderable dreams
Of affluence, — all were there.

Poor Finzer, with his dreams and schemes,
Fares hard now in the race,
With heart and eye that have a task
When he looks in the face
Of one who might so easily
Have been in Finzer's place.

He comes unfailing for the loan
We give and then forget;
He comes, and probably for years
Will he be coming yet, —
Familiar as an old mistake,
And futile as regret.

CALVARY

Friendless and faint, with martyred steps and slow,
Faint for the flesh, but for the spirit free,
Stung by the mob that came to see the show,
The Master toiled along to Calvary;
We giped him, as he went, with houndish glee,
Till his dimmed eyes for us did overflow;
We cursed his vengeless hands thrice wretchedly, —
And this was nineteen hundred years ago.

But after nineteen hundred years the shame
 Still clings, and we have not made good the loss
 That outraged faith has entered in his name.
 Ah, when shall come love's courage to be strong!
 Tell me, O Lord — tell me, O Lord, how long
 Are we to keep Christ writhing on the cross!

EDGAR LEE MASTERS

Edgar Lee Masters was born at Garnett, Kansas, August 23, 1869, of old Puritan and pioneering stock. When he was still a boy, the family moved to Illinois, where he studied law in his father's office at Lewiston. He then went to Chicago, where he became a successful and prominent attorney.

Before going to Chicago, Masters had composed a great quantity of verse in traditional forms; by the time he was twenty-four he had written about four hundred poems betraying the influence of Poe, Shelley, and Swinburne. His work, previous to the publication of *Spoon River Anthology*, was undistinguished.

Taking as his model *The Greek Anthology*, which his friend William Marion Reedy had pressed upon him, in 1914 Masters evolved *Spoon River Anthology*, over two hundred epitaphs, in which the dead of a Middle Western town are supposed to have written the truth about themselves. Through these frank revelations, the village is recreated for us; it lives again, with all its intrigues, hypocrisies, feuds, martyrdoms, and occasional exaltations. The monotony of existence in a drab township, the defeat of ideals, the struggle toward higher goals — all are synthesized in these crowded pages. All moods and all manner of voices are here — even Masters's, who explains the reason for his form through "Petit, the Poet."

Songs and Satires (1916) is notable for several lengthy soliloquies and the eloquent "Silence." *Starved Rock* (1919), *Domesday Book* (1920), *The New Spoon River* (1924), *The Fate of the Jury* (1929), *Godbey* (1931), and *Invisible Landscapes* (1935) are, like all Masters's later books, queer mixtures of good, bad, and derivative verse.

Masters continued to work with increasing speed and lessening self-restraint. Between 1935 and 1938 he wrote a lengthy autobiography (*Across Spoon River*), a novel, three controversial biographies (Whitman, Lindsay, Twain), and two new books of poems. *Poems of People* (1936) and *The New World* (1937) were large attempts to record the panorama of America and its epical figures. In

these the intention was greater than the execution, the backgrounds more interesting than the characters. As Robert Littell wrote, "What we remember is the expedition, and its desperately honest, saltless aftertaste, but we don't remember any of the individuals. There were no characters, and what we mistook for such were case histories in the clinic of life's hospital, with Mr. Masters as surgeon rather than artist."

PETIT, THE POET

Seeds in a dry pod, tick, tick, tick,
Tick, tick, tick, like mites in a quarrel —
Faint iambics that the full breeze wakens —
But the pine tree makes a symphony thereof.
Triolets, villanelles, rondels, rondeaus,
Ballades by the score with the same old thought:
The snows and the roses of yesterday are vanished;
And what is love but a rose that fades?
Life all around me here in the village:
Tragedy, comedy, valor and truth,
Courage, constancy, heroism, failure —
All in the loom, and, oh, what patterns!
Woodlands, meadows, streams and rivers —
Blind to all of it all my life long.
Triolets, villanelles, rondels, rondeaus,
Seeds in a dry pod, tick, tick, tick,
Tick, tick, tick, what little iambics,
While Homer and Whitman roared in the pines!

LUCINDA MATLOCK

I went to the dances at Chandlerville,
And played snap-out at Winchester.
One time we changed partners,
Driving home in the moonlight of middle June,
And then I found Davis.
We were married and lived together for seventy years,
Enjoying, working, raising the twelve children,
Eight of whom we lost
Ere I had reached the age of sixty.

I spun, I wove, I kept the house, I nursed the sick,
I made the garden, and for holiday
Rambled over the fields where sang the larks,
And by Spoon River gathering many a shell,
And many a flower and medicinal weed —
Shouting to the wooded hills, singing to the green valleys.
At ninety-six I had lived enough, that is all,
And passed to a sweet repose.
What is this I hear of sorrow and weariness,
Anger, discontent and drooping hopes?
Degenerate sons and daughters,
Life is too strong for you —
It takes life to love Life.

ANNE RUTLEDGE

Out of me unworthy and unknown
The vibrations of deathless music;
“With malice toward none, with charity for all.”
Out of me the forgiveness of millions toward millions,
And the beneficent face of a nation
Shining with justice and truth.
I am Anne Rutledge who sleep beneath these weeds,
Beloved in life of Abraham Lincoln,
Wedded to him, not through union,
But through separation.
Bloom forever, O Republic,
From the dust of my bosom!

STEPHEN CRANE

Stephen Crane, whose career was one of the most brilliant and short-lived in American letters, was born at Newark, New Jersey, November 1, 1871. After studying at Lafayette College, he entered journalism at sixteen and became a reporter and writer of newspaper sketches. When he died, at the age of thirty, he had produced ten printed volumes (one of which, *The Red Badge of Courage*, is a classic among descriptive novels), two more were announced for publication, and two others were appearing serially.

At various periods in Crane's brief career, he experimented in verse, seeking to find new effects in unrhymed lines. The results were embodied in two volumes of unusual poetry, *The Black Riders* (1895) and *War Is Kind* (1899); highly suggestive lines that anticipated the Imagists and the epigrammatic free verse that followed fifteen years later. It was not until 1930 that his *Collected Poems* appeared.

It is likely that his feverish energy of production aggravated the illness that caused Crane's death. He reached the Black Forest only to die at the journey's end, June 5, 1900.

I SAW A MAN

I saw a man pursuing the horizon;
Round and round they sped.
I was disturbed at this;
I accosted the man.
"It is futile," I said,
"You can never" —

"You lie," he cried,
And ran on.

THE WAYFARER

The wayfarer,
Perceiving the pathway to truth,
Was struck with astonishment.
It was thickly grown with weeds.
"Ha," he said,
"I see that no one has passed here
In a long time."
Later he saw that each weed
Was a singular knife.
"Well," he mumbled at last,
"Doubtless there are other roads."

THE BLADES OF GRASS

In Heaven,
Some little blades of grass
Stood before God.
"What did you do?"

Then all save one of the little blades
Began eagerly to relate
The merits of their lives.
This one stayed a small way behind,
Ashamed.
Presently, God said,
"And what did you do?"
The little blade answered, "Oh, my Lord,
Memory is bitter to me,
For, if I did good deeds,
I know not of them."
Then God, in all his splendor,
Arose from his throne.
"Oh, best little blade of grass!" he said.

T. A. DALY

Thomas Augustine Daly was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, May 28, 1871. He attended Villanova College and Fordham University (1889), leaving there at the end of his sophomore year to become a newspaper man. Since 1891 he has been on the staff of various Philadelphia journals, writing reviews, editorials, travel-notes and, most of all, running the columns in which his much-quoted verse originally appeared.

Canzoni (1906) and *Carmina* (1909) contain the best-known of Daly's varied dialect verse. Although he has written in half a dozen different idioms including "straight" English (*vide Songs of Wedlock*, 1916), his half-humorous, half-pathetic interpretations of the Irish and Italian immigrants are his *forte*. "Mia Carlotta" ranks with the best dialect of the period; "The Song of the Thrush," though less immediate in appeal, is a more personal communication.

Seldom descending to caricature, Daly exhibits the foibles of his characters without exploiting them; even the lightest passages in *McAroni Ballads* (1919) are done with delicacy and a not too sentimental appreciation. Less popular than Riley or Dunbar, Daly is more skillful and versatile than either, his range and quality are comparable to Field's. A representative *Selected Poems* (1936) was prefaced by Christopher Morley.

THE SONG OF THE THRUSH

Ah! the May was grand this mornin'!
 Shure, how could I feel forlorn in
 Such a land, when tree and flower tossed their kisses to the
 breeze?
 Could an Irish heart be quiet
 While the Spring was runnin' riot,
 An' the birds of free America were singin' in the trees?
 In the songs that they were singin'
 No familiar note was ringin',
 But I strove to imitate them an' I whistled like a lad.
 Oh, my heart was warm to love them
 For the very newness of them —
 For the ould songs that they helped me to forget — an' I
 was glad.

So I mocked the feathered choir
 To my hungry heart's desire,
 An' I gloried in the comradeship that made their joy my
 own.
 Till a new note sounded, stillin'
 All the rest. A thrush was trillin'!
 Ah, the thrush I left behind me in the fields about Athlone!
 Where, upon the whitethorn swayin',
 He was minstrel of the Mayin',
 In my days of love an' laughter that the years have laid at
 rest;
 Here again his notes were ringin'!
 But I'd lost the heart for singin' —
 Ah, the song I could not answer was the one I knew the best.

MIA CARLOTTA

Giuseppe, da barber, ees greata for " mash,"
 He gotta da bigga, da blacka mustache,
 Good clo'es an' good styła an' playnta good cash.

W'enevra Giuseppe ees walk on da street,
 Da peopla dey talka, " how nobby! how neat!
 How softa da handa, how smalla da feet."

He raisa hees hat an' he shaka hees curls,
 An' smila weeth teetha so shiny like pearls;
 O! many da heart of da seelly young girls

He gotta —
 Yes, playnta he gotta —
 But notta
 Carlotta!

Giuseppe, da barber, he maka da eye,
 An' lika da steam engine puffa an' sigh,
 For catcha Carlotta w'en she ees go by.

Carlotta she walka weeth nose in da air,
 An' look through Giuseppe weeth far-away stare,
 As eef she no see dere ees som'body dere.

Giuseppe, da barber, he gotta da cash,
 He gotta da clo'es an' da bigga mustache,
 He gotta da seelly young girls for da "mash,"

But notta —
 You bat my life, notta —
 Carlotta!
 I gotta!

ARTHUR GUITERMAN

Arthur Guiterman was born in Vienna, Austria, of American parents, November 20, 1871. He was brought to America as a child and has lived most of his life in New York City. An unusually prolific versifier, he contributed to countless magazines. His most popular pieces are in *The Laughing Muse* (1915) and *The Light Guitar* (1923). *Ballads of Old New York* (1920) discloses Guiterman as a historical recorder as well as a rhymester. A half-humorous, half-sentimental collection, *Death and General Putnam*, appeared in 1935.

Whether serious or satirical or merely comic, Guiterman's verse usually reveals an amiable manner and a light touch.

DAMMING THE MISSOURI

Once a company of Beavers in their engineering fury
Took a notion that their Mission was to dam the Big Mis-
souri;

Under Consecrated Leaders they assembled in convention
For the instant prosecution of their laudable intention.
They were able hardwood-biters, they were doughty timber-
topplers,

And they beavered down the willows, and they felled the
heavy poplars,

And they laid them to the rifle, and were very, very clever,
They were brilliant! — yet the river paid them no regard
whatever,

But through barrens dry and sandy, or through marshes wet
and drippy

Went on flowing, flowing, flowing to the mighty Mississippi.

When we try to curb the surges of unchanging human nature,
Or to quench a conflagration by an act of legislature,
Or to stem a revolution by the words of quiet thinkers,
Or to hold Religion static in a martingale and blinkers,
Or to turn the silent current of Continuous Creation,
Or to cork the effervescence of a rising generation,
Or to stop our zealous doctors from inventing new diseases,
Or to keep a wife from doing just exactly as she pleases,
We are every bit as crazy, as I'll prove to any jury,
As those enterprising Beavers when they dammed the Big
Missouri.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Paul Laurence Dunbar was born in 1872 at Dayton, Ohio, the son of Negro slaves. He was, before and after he began to write his verse, an elevator-boy. He tried newspaper work unsuccessfully and, in 1899, was given a minor position in the Library of Congress at Washington, D.C.

Dunbar's first collection, *Lyrics of Lowly Life* (1896), contains many of his most characteristic poems. In an introduction, in which mention was made of the octroon Dumas and the great Russian poet Pushkin, who was a mulatto, William Dean Howells wrote, "So far as I can remember, Paul Dunbar was the only man of pure African blood and of American civilization to feel the Negro life aesthetically and express it lyrically. . . . His brilliant and unique achievement was to have studied the American Negro objectively, and to have represented him as he found him."

Lyrics of the Hearthside (1899) and *Lyrics of Love and Laughter* (1903) are two other volumes full of folk-stuff. And though the final *Lyrics of Sunshine and Shadow* (1905) is less original, being crowded with echoes of all kinds of poetry, it contains a few of Dunbar's least-known but keenest interpretations.

Dunbar died in Dayton, Ohio, February 10, 1906.

THE TURNING OF THE BABIES IN THE BED

Woman's sho' a cur'ous critter, an' dey ain't no doubtin' dat.

She's a mess o' funny capahs f'om huh slippahs to huh hat.
Ef yo' tries to un'erstan' huh, an' yo' fails, des' up an' say:
"D' ain't a bit o' use to try to un'erstan' a woman's way."

I don' mean to be complainin', but I's jes' a-settin' down
Some o' my own obserwations, w'en I cas' my eye eroun'.
Ef yo' ax me fu' to prove it, I ken do it mighty fine,
Fu' dey ain't no bettah 'zample den dis ve'y wife o' mine.

In de ve'y hea't o' midnight, w'en I's sleepin' good an' soun',
I kin hyeah a so't o' rustlin' an' somebody movin' 'roun'.
An' I say, "Lize, whut yo' doin'?" But she frown an' shek
huh haid,

"Hesh yo' mouf, I's only tu'nin' of de chillun in de bed.

"Don' yo' know a chile gits restless, layin' all de night one way?

An' yo' got to kind o' 'range him sev'al times befo' de day?
So de little necks won't worry, an' de little backs won't
break;

Don' yo' t'ink 'cause chillun's chillun dey haint got no pain
an' ache."

So she shakes 'em, an' she twists 'em, an' she tu'ns 'em 'roun'
erbout,

'Twell I don' see how de chillun evah keeps f'om hollahin'
out.

Den she lif's 'em up head down'ards, so's dey won't git livah-
grown,

But dey snoozes des' ez peaceful ez a liza'd on a stone.

W'en hit's mos' nigh time fu' wakin' on de dawn o' jedge-
ment day,

Seems lak I kin hyeah ol' Gab'iel lay his trumpet down an'
say,

"Who dat walkin' 'roun' so easy, down on earf ermong de
dead?" —

'T will be Lizy up a-tu'nin' of de chillun in de bed.

A COQUETTE CONQUERED

Yes, my ha't's ez ha'd ez stone —

Go 'way, Sam, an' lemme 'lone.

No; I ain't gwine change my min';

Ain't gwine ma'y you — nuffin' de kin'.

Phiny loves you true an' deah?

Go ma'y Phiny; whut I keer?

Oh, you needn't mou'n an' cry —

I don't keer how soon you die.

Got a present! Whut yo' got?

Somef'n fu' de pan er pot!

Huh! Yo' sass do sholy beat —

Think I don't git 'nough to eat?

Whut's dat un'neaf yo' coat?

Looks des lak a little shoat.

'Taint no possum? Bless de Lamb!
Yes, it is, you rascal, Sam!

Gin it to me; whut you say?
Ain't you sma't now! Oh, go 'way!
Possum do look mighty nice;
But you ax too big a price.

Tell me, is you talkin' true,
Dat's de gal's whut ma'ies you?
Come back, Sam; now whah's you gwine?
Co'se you knows dat possum's mine!

GUY WETMORE CARRYL

Guy Wetmore Carryl, son of Charles Edward Carryl (see page 53), was born in New York City, March 4, 1873. He was graduated from Columbia University in 1895, was editor of *Munsey's Magazine*, 1895-96, and, during the time he lived abroad (1897 to 1902), was the foreign representative of various American publications.

Inheriting a remarkable technical gift from his father, young Carryl soon surpassed him as well as all other rivals in the field of brilliantly rhymed, brilliantly turned burlesques. Although he wrote several serious poems, collected in the posthumously published *The Garden of Years* (1904), Carryl's most characteristic work is to be found in his perversions of the parables of *Æsop*, *Fables for the Frivolous* (1898), the topsy-turvy interpretations of old nursery rhymes, *Mother Goose for Grownups* (1900), and his fantastic variations on the fairy tales in *Grimm Tales Made Gay* (1903) — all of them with a surprising (and punning) Moral attached.

This extraordinary versifier died, before reaching the height of his power, at the age of thirty-one, in the summer of 1904.

THE SYCOPHANTIC FOX AND THE GULLIBLE RAVEN

A raven sat upon a tree,
And not a word he spoke, for
His beak contained a piece of Brie,
Or, maybe, it was Roquefort.

We'll make it any kind you please —
At all events it was a cheese.

Beneath the tree's umbrageous limb
A hungry fox sat smiling;
He saw the raven watching him,
And spoke in words beguiling:
"I admire," said he, "*ton beau plumage*,"
(The which was simply persiflage.)

Two things there are, no doubt you know,
To which a fox is used:
A rooster that is bound to crow,
A crow that's bound to roost;
And whichever he espies
He tells the most unblushing lies.

"Sweet fowl," he said, "I understand
You're more than merely natty,
I hear you sing to beat the band
And Adelina Patti.
Pray render with your liquid tongue
A bit from 'Götterdämmerung.'"

This subtle speech was aimed to please
The crow, and it succeeded;
He thought no bird in all the trees
Could sing as well as he did.
In flattery completely doused,
He gave the "Jewel Song" from "Faust."

But gravitation's law, of course,
As Isaac Newton showed it,
Exerted on the cheese its force,
And elsewhere soon bestowed it.
In fact, there is no need to tell
What happened when to earth it fell.

I blush to add that when the bird
 Took in the situation
 He said one brief, emphatic word,
 Unfit for publication.
 The fox was greatly startled, but
 He only sighed and answered "Tut."

The Moral is: A fox is bound
 To be a shameless sinner.
 And also: When the cheese comes round
 You know it's after dinner.
 But (what is only known to few)
 The fox is after dinner, too.

HOW JACK FOUND THAT BEANS MAY GO BACK ON A CHAP

Without the slightest basis
 For hypochondriasis,
 A widow had forebodings which a cloud around her flung,
 And with expression cynical
 For half the day a clinical
 Thermometer she held beneath her tongue.

Whene'er she read the papers
 She suffered from the vapors,
 At every tale of malady or accident she'd groan;
 In every new and smart disease,
 From housemaid's knee to heart disease,
 She recognized the symptoms as her own!

She had a yearning chronic
 To try each novel tonic,
 Elixir, panacea, lotion, opiate, and balm;
 And from a homeopathist
 Would change to an hydropathist,
 And back again, with stupefying calm!

She was nervous, cataleptic,
And anemic, and dyspeptic:

Though not convinced of apoplexy, yet she had her fears.
She dwelt with force fanatical,
Upon a twinge rheumatical,
And said she had a buzzing in her ears!

Now all of this bemoaning
And this grumbling and this groaning

The mind of Jack, her son and heir, unconscionably bored.
His heart completely hardening,
He gave his time to gardening,
For raising beans was something he adored.

Each hour in accents morbid
This limp maternal bore bid

Her callous son affectionate and lachrymose good-bys.
She never granted Jack a day
Without some long "Alackaday!"
Accompanied by rolling of the eyes.

But Jack, no panic showing,
Just watched his beanstalk growing,

And twined with tender fingers the tendrils up the pole.
At all her words funereal
He smiled a smile ethereal,
Or sighed an absent-minded "Bless my soul!"

That hollow-hearted creature
Would never change a feature:

No tear bedimmed his eye, however touching was her talk.
She never fussed or flurried him,
The only thing that worried him
Was when no bean-pods grew upon the stalk!

But then he wobbled loosely
His head, and wept profusely,

And, taking out his handkerchief to mop away his tears,

Exclaimed: "It hasn't got any!"

He found this blow to botany

Was sadder than were all his mother's fears.

The Moral is that gardeners pine

Whene'er no pods adorn the vine.

Of all sad words experience gleans

The saddest are: "It *might* have beans."

(I did not make this up myself:

'Twas in a book upon my shelf.

It's witty, but I don't deny

It's rather Whittier than I!)

ANNA HEMPSTEAD BRANCH

Anna Hempstead Branch was born March 18, 1874, at New London, Connecticut. She graduated from Smith College in 1897 and devoted herself to literature and social service work.

Her two chief volumes, *The Shoes That Danced* (1905) and *Rose of the Wind* (1910), show a singer who is less fanciful than philosophic. Her lines are condensed, rich in poetic revelation; they maintain a high level. "The Monk in the Kitchen," with its spiritual loveliness and verbal felicity, is a celebration of cleanness that gives order an almost mystical nobility.

Although nothing she ever wrote attained the popularity of her shorter works, "Nimrod" has an epic sweep, a large movement which contains many movements of exalted imagery. The religious feeling in this work governed the author as a person no less than as a poet; Miss Branch gave a great part of her life to settlement work on the East Side of New York. She died in the family Colonial home-
stead, the old Hempstead house in Connecticut, September 8, 1937.

THE MONK IN THE KITCHEN

I

Order is a lovely thing;

On disarray it lays its wing,

Teaching simplicity to sing.

It has a meek and lowly grace,

Quiet as a nun's face.
Lo — I will have thee in this place!
Tranquil well of deep delight,
All things that shine through thee appear
As stones through water, sweetly clear.
Thou clarity,
That with angelic charity
Revealest beauty where thou art,
Spread thyself like a clean pool.
Then all the things that in thee are,
Shall seem more spiritual and fair,
Reflection from serener air —
Sunken shapes of many a star
In the high heavens set afar.

II

Ye stolid, homely, visible things,
Above you all brood glorious wings
Of your deep entities, set high,
Like slow moons in a hidden sky.
But you, their likenesses, are spent
Upon another element.
Truly ye are but seemings —
The shadowy cast-off gleamings
Of bright solidities. Ye seem
Soft as water, vague as dream;
Image, cast in a shifting stream.

III

What are ye?
I know not.
Brazen pan and iron pot,
Yellow brick and gray flag-stone
That my feet have trod upon —
Ye seem to me
Vessels of bright mystery.

ANNA HEMPSTEAD BRANCH

For ye do bear a shape, and so
Though ye were made by man, I know
An inner Spirit also made,
And ye his breathings have obeyed.

IV

Shape, the strong and awful Spirit,
Laid his ancient hand on you.
He waste chaos doth inherit;
He can alter and subdue.
Verily, he doth lift up
Matter, like a sacred cup.
Into deep substance he reached, and lo
Where ye were not, ye were; and so
Out of useless nothing, ye
Groaned and laughed and came to be.
And I use you, as I can,
Wonderful uses, made for man,
Iron pot and brazen pan.

V

What are ye?
I know not:
Nor what I really do
When I move and govern you.
There is no small work unto God.
He requires of us greatness;
Of his least creature
A high angelic nature,
Stature superb and bright completeness.
He sets to us no humble duty.
Each act that he would have us do
Is haloed round with strangest beauty;
Terrific deeds and cosmic tasks
Of his plainest child he asks.
When I polish the brazen pan
I hear a creature laugh afar
In the gardens of a star,

And from his burning presence run
Flaming wheels of many a sun.
Whoever makes a thing more bright,
He is an angel of all light.
When I cleanse this earthen floor
My spirit leaps to see
Bright garments trailing over it,
A cleanness made by me.
Purger of all men's thoughts and ways,
With labor do I sound Thy praise,
My work is done for Thee.
Whoever makes a thing more bright,
He is an angel of all light.
Therefore let me spread abroad
The beautiful cleanness of my God.

VI

One time in the cool of dawn
Angels came and worked with me.
The air was soft with many a wing.
They laughed amid my solitude
And cast bright looks on everything.
Sweetly of me did they ask
That they might do my common task.
And all were beautiful — but one
With garments whiter than the sun
Had such a face
Of deep, remembered grace
That when I saw I cried — "Thou art
The great Blood-Brother of my heart.
Where have I seen thee?" — And he said,
"When we are dancing round God's throne,
How often thou art there.
Beauties from thy hands have flown
Like white doves wheeling in mid air.
Nay — thy soul remembers not?
Work on, and cleanse thy iron pot."

VII

What are we? I know not.

WHILE LOVELINESS GOES BY

Sometimes when all the world seems gray and dun
And nothing beautiful, a voice will cry,
"Look out, look out! Angels are drawing nigh!"
Then my slow burdens leave me one by one,
And swiftly does my heart arise and run
Even like a child while loveliness goes by —
And common folk seem children of the sky,
And common things seem shaped of the sun,
Oh, pitiful! that I who love them, must
So soon perceive their shining garments fade!
And slowly, slowly, from my eyes of trust
Their flaming banners sink into a shade!
While this earth's sunshine seems the golden dust
Slow settling from that radiant cavalcade.

AMY LOWELL

Amy Lowell was born in Brookline, Massachusetts, February 9, 1874, of a long line of noted publicists and poets, the first colonist (a Percival Lowell) arriving in Newburyport in 1637. James Russell Lowell was a cousin of her grandfather; Abbott Lawrence, her mother's father, was minister to England; and Abbott Lawrence Lowell, her brother, was president of Harvard University.

Her first volume, *A Dome of Many-colored Glass* (1912), was a strangely unpromising book. The subjects were conventional; the tone was soft and without a trace of personality. It was a queer prologue to the vivid *Sword Blades and Poppy Seed* (1914) and *Men, Women and Ghosts* (1916), which marked not only an extraordinary advance but a totally new individuality. These two volumes contained many distinctive poems written in the usual forms, a score of pictorial pieces illustrating Miss Lowell's identification with the Imagists, and the first appearance in English of "polyphonic prose."

Can Grande's Castle (1918), like the later *Legends* (1921), reveals Miss Lowell as the gifted narrator, the teller of bizarre and brilliant

stories. The feverish agitation is less prominent in her quieter and more personal *Pictures of the Floating World* (1919), a no less distinctive collection. *Legends* (1921) is closely related to *Can Grande's Castle*; here are eleven stories placed against seven different backgrounds. Among her posthumous work, *What's O'Clock?* (1925) is the most outstanding; it includes verses which establish a close kinship with her environment. "Lilacs" and "Meeting-House Hill" are two in this genre. *East Wind* (1926) and *Ballads for Sale* (1927) are other posthumous books, the first a set of New England dramas and tales, the second a miscellaneous collection.

Besides the original poetry, Miss Lowell undertook many studies in foreign literatures; she made the English versions of the poems translated from the Chinese by Florence Ayscough in the vivid *Fir-Flower Tablets* (1921). She also wrote two volumes of critical essays: *Six French Poets* (1915) and *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry* (1917), both of them invaluable aids to the student of contemporary literature. Two years after its publication she acknowledged the authorship of the anonymous *A Critical Fable* (1922), a modern sequel to James Russell Lowell's *A Fable for Critics*. Her monumental *John Keats*, an exhaustive biography and analysis of the poet in two volumes, appeared early in 1925.

For years Miss Lowell had been suffering from ill health; she had been operated upon several times. In April, 1925, her condition became worse; she was forced to cancel a projected lecture trip through England and to cease all work. She died as the result of an unexpected paralytic stroke on May 12, 1925. A comprehensive, if uncritical, biography, *Amy Lowell* (1935) was written by S. Foster Damon; it communicates something of the poet's creative excitement.

SOLITAIRE

When night drifts along the streets of the city,
And sifts down between the uneven roofs,
My mind begins to peek and peer.
It plays at ball in odd, blue Chinese gardens,
And shakes wrought dice-cups in Pagan temples
Amid the broken flutings of white pillars.
It dances with purple and yellow crocuses in its hair,
And its feet shine as they flutter over drenched grasses.
How light and laughing my mind is,
When all good folk have put out their bedroom candles,
And the city is still.

A L A D Y

You are beautiful and faded,
Like an old opera tune
Played upon a harpsichord;
Or like the sun-flooded silks
Of an eighteenth-century boudoir.
In your eyes
Smolder the fallen roses of outlived minutes,
And the perfume of your soul
Is vague and suffusing,
With the pungence of sealed spice-jars.
Your half-tones delight me,
And I grow mad with gazing
At your blent colors.

My vigor is a new-minted penny,
Which I cast at your feet.
Gather it up from the dust
That its sparkle may amuse you.

MEETING-HOUSE HILL

I must be mad, or very tired,
When the curve of a blue bay beyond a railroad track
Is shrill and sweet to me like the sudden springing of a tune,
And the sight of a white church above thin trees in a city
square
Amazes my eyes as though it were the Parthenon.
Clear, reticent, superbly final,
With the pillars of its portico refined to a cautious elegance,
It dominates the weak trees,
And the shot of its spire
Is cool and candid,
Rising into an unresisting sky.
Strange meeting-house
Pausing a moment upon a squalid hill-top.
I watch the spire sweeping the sky,
I am dizzy with the movement of the sky;

I might be watching a mast
With its royals set full
Straining before a two-reef breeze.
I might be sighting a tea-clipper,
Tacking into the blue bay,
Just back from Canton
With her hold full of green and blue porcelain
And a Chinese coolie leaning over the rail
Gazing at the white spire
With dull, sea-spent eyes.

WIND AND SILVER

Greatly shining,
The Autumn moon floats in the thin sky;
And the fish-ponds shake their backs and flash their dragon
scales
As she passes over them.

A DECADE

When you came, you were like red wine and honey,
And the taste of you burnt my mouth with its sweetness.
Now you are like morning bread,
Smooth and pleasant.
I hardly taste you at all, for I know your savor;
But I am completely nourished.

MADONNA OF THE EVENING FLOWERS

All day long I have been working,
Now I am tired.
I call: "Where are you?"
But there is only the oak tree rustling in the wind.
The house is very quiet,
The sun shines in on your books,
On your scissors and thimble just put down,

But you are not there.
Suddenly I am lonely:
Where are you?
I go about searching.

Then I see you,
Standing under a spire of pale blue larkspur,
With a basket of roses on your arm.
You are cool, like silver,
And you smile.

I think the Canterbury bells are playing little tunes,
You tell me that the peonies need spraying,
That the columbines have overrun all bounds,
That the pyrus japonica should be cut back and rounded.
You tell me these things.
But I look at you, heart of silver,
White heart-flame of polished silver,
Burning beneath the blue steeples of the larkspur,
And I long to kneel instantly at your feet,
While all about us peal the loud, sweet *Te Deums* of the
Canterbury bells.

NIGHT CLOUDS

The white mares of the moon rush along the sky
Beating their golden hoofs upon the glass Heavens;
The white mares of the moon are all standing on their hind
legs
Pawing at the green porcelain doors of the remote Heavens.
Fly, mares!
Strain your utmost,
Scatter the milky dust of stars,
Or the tiger sun will leap upon you and destroy you
With one lick of his vermilion tongue.

Robert (Lee) Frost was born in San Francisco, California, March 26, 1875. At the age of ten he came East to the towns and hills where, for eight generations, his forefathers had lived. After graduating from the high school at Lawrence, Massachusetts, in 1892, Frost entered Dartmouth College, where he remained only a few months. The routine of study was too much for him; he decided to earn his living, and became a bobbin boy in one of the mills at Lawrence. He had already begun to write poetry; a few of his verses had appeared in *The Independent*. But the strange, soil-flavored quality which even then distinguished his lines was not relished by the editor. For twenty years Frost continued to write his highly characteristic work in spite of the discouraging apathy, and for twenty years the poet remained unknown.

After another unsuccessful attempt to achieve culture *via* college (Harvard 1897), Frost turned to labor. Some years before, at the age of seventeen, he had tramped through the Carolinas looking for work. Now he engaged in a variety of industries: for three years he taught school, made shoes, edited a weekly paper, and became a farmer at Derry, New Hampshire. During the next eleven years Frost struggled to wrest a living from the stubborn granite hills. Loneliness claimed him for its own; the rocks refused to give him a living; the literary world continued oblivious of his existence. In the twenty years before 1913 his poetry had brought him two hundred dollars — an average of ten dollars a year! Frost sought a change of environment and, after a few years' teaching at Derry and Plymouth, New Hampshire, sold his farm and, with his wife and four children, sailed for England in September, 1912.

A few months later, *A Boy's Will* (1913), his first collection, was published, and Frost was recognized at once as an authentic voice of modern poetry. In the spring of the same year, *North of Boston* (1914), one of the most intensely American books ever printed, was published in England. (See Preface.) This is, as he has called it, a "book of people." And it is more than that — it is a book of backgrounds as living and dramatic as the people they overshadow. Frost vivifies a stone wall, an empty cottage, an apple-tree, a mountain, a forgotten wood-pile left

To warm the frozen swamp as best it could
With the slow, smokeless burning of decay.

North of Boston, like its successors, contains much of the finest poetry of our time. Rich in actualities, richer in spiritual values, the lines move with the double force of observation and implication.

The poet's characters are close to their soil; they remain rooted in realism. But Frost is never a photographic realist. "There are," he once said, "two types of realist — the one who offers a good deal of dirt with his potato to show that it is a real one; and the one who is satisfied with the potato brushed clean. I'm inclined to be the second kind. . . . To me, the thing that art does for life is to strip it to form."

Sounds, the delicate accents of speech, find their most sympathetic recorder here. Frost's lines disclose the subtle shades of emphasis by presenting only a significant detail. "If I must be classified as a poet," Frost once said, with the suspicion of a twinkle, "I might be called a Synecdochist; for I prefer the synecdoche in poetry — that figure of speech in which we use a part for the whole." In Frost's work, with its genius for understatement, humor and philosophy are amazingly combined.

In March, 1915, Frost came back to America. *North of Boston* had been published in the United States, and its author, who had left the country an unknown writer, returned to find himself famous. *Mountain Interval*, containing some of Frost's most beautiful poems ("Birches," "An Old Man's Winter Night," "The Hill Wife"), appeared in 1916. The idiom is the same as in the earlier volumes, but the convictions are stronger. The essential things are unchanged. The first poem in Frost's first book sums it up:

They would not find me changed from him they knew —
Only more sure of all I thought was true.

New Hampshire (1923), which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for the best volume of poetry published in 1923, synthesizes Frost's qualities: it combines the stark unity of *North of Boston* and the diffused geniality of *Mountain Interval*. If any one thing predominates, it is a feeling of quiet classicism; the poet's voice is lowered, but not its strength. *Selected Poems* (revised in 1928 and 1935) and a rearranged *Collected Poems* (1930), which again won the Pulitzer Prize, confirmed the conclusions; the unpretentious bucolics had become contemporary classics.

It has been charged that Frost's work suffers from an exclusiveness, and even his most ardent admirers admit that his is not an inclusive passion like Whitman's. But Frost loves what he loves with a fierce attachment and a tenderness fixed beyond an easily transferred regard. His devotion to earth is, even more than Wordsworth's, rich in its fidelity; what his poetry may lack in windy range is compensated for by its untroubled depths.

This is more true than ever of *West-Running Brook* (1928) which is a reflection and restatement of all that has gone before. The lyrics are tender and semi-autobiographical. Beyond the fact ("the dearest

dream that labor knows"), beyond the tone of voice, there is that unifying emotion which is Frost's peculiar quality and his uplifting spirit. *A Further Range* (1936) won Frost the Pulitzer Prize for the third time. It proved that Frost had no contemporary rival in America and, except for William Butler Yeats, none in England. In this volume the effects are broader, the play is more pronouncedly teasing, the style an inimitable blend of fact and fantasy, inner seriousness and outer humor. Casual and yet critical, the essential thought caught and convinced the reader who was fortified by the poet's serenity, strengthened by his strength.

Frost taught for a while at the University of Michigan and at Amherst, where he was "professor in residence" and where he acted as "a sort of poetic radiator." The facts of his life, his backgrounds, and a rich miscellany of opinion appeared in *Recognition of Robert Frost* (1937), a valuable set of essays and estimates.

THE PASTURE

I'm going out to clean the pasture spring;
I'll only stop to rake the leaves away
(And wait to watch the water clear, I may):
I shan't be gone long. — You come too.

I'm going out to fetch the little calf
That's standing by the mother. It's so young,
It totters when she licks it with her tongue.
I shan't be gone long. — You come too.

THE TUFT OF FLOWERS

I went to turn the grass once after one
Who mowed it in the dew before the sun.

The dew was gone that made his blade so keen
Before I came to view the leveled scene.

I looked for him behind an isle of trees;
I listened for his whetstone on the breeze.

But he had gone his way, the grass all mown,
And I must be, as he had been, — alone,

"As all must be," I said within my heart,
"Whether they work together or apart."

But as I said it, swift there passed me by
On noiseless wing a bewildered butterfly,

Seeking with memories grown dim over night
Some resting flower of yesterday's delight.

And once I marked his flight go round and round,
As where some flower lay withering on the ground.

And then he flew as far as eye could see,
And then on tremulous wing came back to me.

I thought of questions that have no reply,
And would have turned to toss the grass to dry;

But he turned first, and led my eye to look
At a tall tuft of flowers beside a brook,

A leaping tongue of bloom the scythe had spared
Beside a reedy brook the scythe had bared.

I left my place to know them by their name,
Finding them butterfly-weed when I came.

The mower in the dew had loved them thus,
By leaving them to flourish, not for us,

Nor yet to draw one thought of ours to him,
But from sheer morning gladness at the brim.

The butterfly and I had lit upon,
Nevertheless, a message from the dawn,

That made me hear the wakening birds around,
And hear his long scythe whispering to the ground,

And feel a spirit kindred to my own;
So that henceforth I worked no more alone;

But glad with him, I worked as with his aid,
And weary, sought at noon with him the shade;

And dreaming, as it were, held brotherly speech
With one whose thought I had not hoped to reach.

"Men work together," I told him from the heart,
"Whether they work together or apart."

MENDING WALL

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
The work of hunters is another thing:
I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them made,
But at spring mending-time we find them there.
I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.
We keep the wall between us as we go.
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance;
"Stay where you are until our backs are turned!"
We wear our fingers rough with handling them.
Oh, just another kind of outdoor game,
One on a side. It comes to little more:
He is all pine and I am apple-orchard.
My apple trees will never get across

And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, "Good fences make good neighbors."
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
"Why do they make good neighbors? Isn't it
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offense.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down!" I could say "Elves" to him,
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself. I see him there,
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, "Good fences make good neighbors."

BLUE-BUTTERFLY DAY

It is blue-butterfly day here in spring,
And with these sky-flakes down in flurry on flurry,
There is more unmixed color on the wing
Than flowers will show for days unless they hurry.

But these are flowers that fly and all but sing;
And now from having ridden out desire,
They lie closed over in the wind and cling
Where wheels have freshly sliced the April mire.

BIRCHES

When I see birches bend to left and right
Across the line of straighter darker trees,
I like to think some boy's been swinging them.

But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay.
Ice-storms do that. Often you must have seen them
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
After a rain. They click upon themselves
As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored
As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.
Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells
Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust —
Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away
You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.
They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load,
And they seem not to break; though once they are bowed
So low for long, they never right themselves:
You may see their trunks arching in the woods
Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground
Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair
Before them over their heads to dry in the sun.

But I was going to say when Truth broke in
With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm,
I should prefer to have some boy bend them
As he went out and in to fetch the cows —
Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,
Whose only play was what he found himself,
Summer or winter, and could play alone.
One by one he subdued his father's trees
By riding them down over and over again
Until he took the stiffness out of them,
And not one but hung limp, not one was left
For him to conquer. He learned all there was
To learn about not launching out too soon
And so not carrying the tree away
Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise
To the top branches, climbing carefully
With the same pains you use to fill a cup
Up to the brim, and even above the brim.
Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish,
Kicking his way down through the air to the ground.

So was I once myself a swinger of birches;
And so I dream of going back to be.
It's when I'm weary of considerations,
And life is too much like a pathless wood
Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs
Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
From a twig's having lashed across it open.
I'd like to get away from earth awhile
And then come back to it and begin over.
May no fate willfully misunderstand me
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:
I don't know where it's likely to go better.
I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,
And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk
Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,
But dipped its top and set me down again.
That would be good both going and coming back.
One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

THE ONSET

Always the same when on a fated night
At last the gathered snow lets down as white
As may be in dark woods and with a song
It shall not make again all winter long —
Of hissing on the yet uncovered ground, —
I almost stumble looking up and round,
As one who, overtaken by the end,
Gives up his errand and lets death descend
Upon him where he is, with nothing done
To evil, no important triumph won
More than if life had never been begun.

Yet all the precedent is on my side:
I know that winter-death has never tried
The earth but it has failed; the snow may heap
In long storms an undrifted four feet deep

As measured against maple, birch or oak;
It cannot check the Peeper's silver croak;
And I shall see the snow all go down hill
In water of a slender April rill
That flashes tail through last year's withered brake
And dead weed like a disappearing snake.
Nothing will be left white but here a birch
And there a clump of houses with a church.

THE DEATH OF THE HIRED MAN

Mary sat musing on the lamp-flame at the table
Waiting for Warren. When she heard his step,
She ran on tiptoe down the darkened passage
To meet him in the doorway with the news
And put him on his guard. "Silas is back."
She pushed him outward with her through the door
And shut it after her. "Be kind," she said.
She took the market things from Warren's arms
And set them on the porch, then drew him down
To sit beside her on the wooden steps.
"When was I ever anything but kind to him?"
But I'll not have the fellow back," he said.
"I told him so last haying, didn't I?"
'If he left then,' I said, 'that ended it.'
What good is he? Who else will harbor him
At his age for the little he can do?
What help he is there's no depending on.
Off he goes always when I need him most.
'He thinks he ought to earn a little pay,
Enough at least to buy tobacco with,
So he won't have to beg and be beholden.'
'All right,' I say, 'I can't afford to pay
Any fixed wages, though I wish I could.'
'Someone else can.' 'Then someone else will have to.'
I shouldn't mind his bettering himself
If that was what it was. You can be certain,
When he begins like that, there's someone at him
Trying to coax him off with pocket-money, —

In haying time, when any help is scarce.
In winter he comes back to us. I'm done."

"Sh! not so loud: he'll hear you," Mary said.

"I want him to: he'll have to soon or late."

"He's worn out. He's asleep beside the stove.
When I came up from Rowe's I found him here,
Huddled against the barn-door fast asleep,
A miserable sight, and frightening, too —
You needn't smile — I didn't recognize him —
I wasn't looking for him — and he's changed.
Wait till you see."

"Where did you say he'd been? "

"He didn't say. I dragged him to the house,
And gave him tea and tried to make him smoke.
I tried to make him talk about his travels,
Nothing would do: he just kept nodding off."

"What did he say? Did he say anything? "

"But little."

"Anything? Mary, confess
He said he'd come to ditch the meadow for me."

"Warren! "

"But did he? I just want to know."

"Of course he did. What would you have him say?
Surely you wouldn't grudge the poor old man
Some humble way to save his self-respect.
He added, if you really care to know,
He meant to clear the upper pasture, too.
That sounds like something you have heard before?

Warren, I wish you could have heard the way
He jumbled everything. I stopped to look
Two or three times — he made me feel so queer —
To see if he was talking in his sleep.
He ran on Harold Wilson — you remember —
The boy you had in haying four years since.
He's finished school, and teaching in his college.
Silas declares you'll have to get him back.
He says they two will make a team for work:
Between them they will lay this farm as smooth!
The way he mixed that in with other things.
He thinks young Wilson a likely lad, though daft
On education — you know how they fought
All through July under the blazing sun,
Silas up on the cart to build the load,
Harold along beside to pitch it on."

"Yes, I took care to keep well out of earshot."

"Well, those days trouble Silas like a dream.
You wouldn't think they would. How some things linger!
Harold's young college boy's assurance piqued him.
After so many years he still keeps finding
Good arguments he sees he might have used.
I sympathize. I know just how it feels
To think of the right thing to say too late.
Harold's associated in his mind with Latin.
He asked me what I thought of Harold's saying
He studied Latin like the violin
Because he liked it — that an argument!
He said he couldn't make the boy believe
He could find water with a hazel prong —
Which showed how much good school had ever done him.
He wanted to go over that. But most of all
He thinks if he could have another chance
To teach him how to build a load of hay —"

"I know, that's Silas' one accomplishment.
He bundles every forkful in its place,

And tags and numbers it for future reference,
So he can find and easily dislodge it
In the unloading. Silas does that well.
He takes it out in bunches like birds' nests.
You never see him standing on the hay
He's trying to lift, straining to lift himself."

"He thinks if he could teach him that, he'd be
Some good perhaps to someone in the world.
He hates to see a boy the fool of books.
Poor Silas, so concerned for other folk,
And nothing to look backward to with pride,
And nothing to look forward to with hope,
So now and never any different."

Part of a moon was falling down the west,
Dragging the whole sky with it to the hills.
Its light poured softly in her lap. She saw
And spread her apron to it. She put out her hand
Among the harp-like morning-glory strings,
Taut with the dew from garden bed to eaves,
As if she played unheard the tenderness
That wrought on him beside her in the night.
"Warren," she said, "he has come home to die:
You needn't be afraid he'll leave you this time."

"Home," he mocked gently.

"Yes, what else but home?

It all depends on what you mean by home.
Of course he's nothing to us, any more
Than was the hound that came a stranger to us
Out of the woods, worn out upon the trail."

"Home is the place where, when you have to go there,
They have to take you in."

"I should have called it
Something you somehow haven't to deserve."

Warren leaned out and took a step or two,
Picked up a little stick, and brought it back
And broke it in his hand and tossed it by.
"Silas has better claim on us, you think,
Than on his brother? Thirteen little miles
As the road winds would bring him to his door.
Silas has walked that far no doubt today.
Why didn't he go there? His brother's rich,
A somebody — director in the bank."

"He never told us that."

"We know it though."

"I think his brother ought to help, of course.
I'll see to that if there is need. He ought of right
To take him in, and might be willing to —
He may be better than appearances.
But have some pity on Silas. Do you think
If he'd had any pride in claiming kin
Or anything he looked for from his brother,
He'd keep so still about him all this time?"

"I wonder what's between them."

"I can tell you.

Silas is what he is — we wouldn't mind him —
But just the kind that kinsfolk can't abide.
He never did a thing so very bad.
He don't know why he isn't quite as good
As anyone. He won't be made ashamed
To please his brother, worthless though he is."

"I can't think Si ever hurt anyone."

"No, but he hurt my heart the way he lay
And rolled his old head on that sharp-edged chair-back.
He wouldn't let me put him on the lounge.
You must go in and see what you can do.

I made the bed up for him there tonight.
You'll be surprised at him — how much he's broken.
His working days are done; I'm sure of it."

"I'd not be in a hurry to say that."

"I haven't been. Go, look, see for yourself.
But, Warren, please remember how it is:
He's come to help you ditch the meadow.
He has a plan. You mustn't laugh at him.
He may not speak of it, and then he may.
I'll sit and see if that small sailing cloud
Will hit or miss the moon."

It hit the moon.
Then there were three there, making a dim row,
The moon, the little silver cloud, and she.

Warren returned — too soon, it seemed to her,
Slipped to her side, caught up her hand and waited.

"Warren?" she questioned.

"Dead," was all he answered.

SAND DUNES

Sea waves are green and wet,
But up from where they die
Rise others vaster yet,
And those are brown and dry.

They are the sea made land
To come at the fisher town,
And bury in solid sand
The men she could not drown.

She may know cove and cape,
But she does not know mankind
If by any change of shape
She hopes to cut off mind.

Men left her a ship to sink;
They can leave her a hut as well,
And be but more free to think
For the one more cast-off shell.

THE PASSING GLIMPSE

I often see flowers from a passing car
That are gone before I can tell what they are.

I want to get out of the train and go back
To see what they were beside the track.

I name all the kinds I am sure they weren't:
Not fireweed loving where woods have burnt —

Nor bluebells gracing a tunnel mouth —
Nor lupine living on sand and drouth.

Was something brushed across my mind
That no one on earth will ever find?

Heaven gives its glimpses only to those
Not in position to look too close.

AN OLD MAN'S WINTER NIGHT

All out of doors looked darkly in at him
Through the thin frost, almost in separate stars,
That gathers on the pane in empty rooms.
What kept his eyes from giving back the gaze

Was the lamp tilted near them in his hand.
What kept him from remembering what it was
That brought him to that creaking room was age.
He stood with barrels round him — at a loss.
And having scared the cellar under him
In clomping there, he scared it once again
In clomping off; and scared the outer night,
Which has its sounds, familiar, like the roar
Of trees and crack of branches, common things,
But nothing so like beating on a box.
A light he was to no one but himself
Where now he sat, concerned with he knew what;
A quiet light, and then not even that.
He consigned to the moon, such as she was,
So late-arising, to the broken moon
As better than the sun in any case
For such a charge, his snow upon the roof,
His icicles along the wall to keep;
And slept. The log that shifted with a jolt
Once in the stove, disturbed him and he shifted,
And eased his heavy breathing, but still slept.
One aged man — one man — can't fill a house,
A farm, a countryside, or if he can,
It's thus he does it of a winter night.

NOTHING GOLD CAN STAY

Nature's first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.
Her early leaf's a flower;
But only so an hour.
Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing gold can stay.

TO A YOUNG WRETCH

As gay for you to take your father's ax
As take his gun — rod — to go hunting — fishing.
You nick my spruce until its fiber cracks;
It gives up standing straight and goes down swishing.
You link an arm in its arm, and you lean
Across the light snow homeward smelling green.

I could have bought you just as good a tree
To frizzle resin in a candle flame;
And what a saving 'twould have been to me.
But tree by charity is not the same
As tree by enterprise and expedition.
I must not spoil your Christmas with contrition.

It is your Christmases against my woods,
But even where thus opposing interests kill,
They are to be thought of as conflicting goods
Oftener than as conflicting good and ill;
Which makes the war-god seem no special dunce
For always fighting on both sides at once.

And though in tinsel chain and popcorn rope,
My tree, a captive in your window bay,
Has lost its footing on my mountain slope
And lost the stars of heaven, may, oh may,
The symbol star it lifts against your ceiling
Help me accept its fate with Christmas feeling.

STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

CARL SANDBURG

Carl (August) Sandburg was born of Swedish stock at Galesburg, Illinois, January 6, 1878. His schooling was haphazard; at thirteen he went to work on a milk wagon. During the next six years he was, in rapid succession, porter in a barber shop, scene-shifter in a cheap theater, truck-handler in a brick-yard, turner apprentice in a pottery, dish-washer in Denver and Omaha hotels, harvest hand in Kansas wheat-fields. These tasks equipped him to be the laureate of industrial America.

In 1904, Sandburg published a forgotten pamphlet of twenty-two poems, uneven in quality but strangely like the work of the mature Sandburg in feeling. It was twelve years later before the poet became known to the public.

Chicago Poems (1916) is full of ferment; it seethes with poetry surcharged with energy. Here is an exultation that is also an exaltation. Sandburg's speech is simple and powerful; he uses slang as freely as his predecessors used the tongue of their times. Immediately cries of protest were heard; Sandburg was coarse and brutal, his language unrefined, unfit for poetry. His detractors forgot that Sandburg was brutal only when dealing with brutality; beneath his toughness he was one of the tenderest of living poets.

Cornhuskers (1918) is another step forward; it is fully as muscular as its forerunner and far more sensitive. The gain in restraint is evident in the very first poem, a magnificent vision of the prairie.

Here is something of the surge of a Norse saga. But the raw violence is restrained; there are, in this volume, delicate perceptions of beauty that astonish those who think Sandburg can write only a big-fisted, roughneck sort of poetry. "Cool Tombs," one of the most poignant lyrics of our time, moves with a new music; "Grass" whispers as quietly as the earlier "Fog" stole in on stealthy, cat-like feet.

Smoke and Steel (1920), which divided the Pulitzer Prize, is the sublimation of its predecessors. In this ripest of his collections, Sandburg has fused mood, accent, and image, a fit setting for the title-poem, which is an epic of industrialism. Smoke-belching chimneys are here, quarries and great boulders of iron-ribbed rock; here are titanic visions: the dreams of men and machinery. And silence is here — the silence of sleeping tenements and sun-soaked cornfields. *Slabs of the Sunburnt West*, a smaller collection, appeared in 1922. *Selected Poems*, with an introduction by the English critic Rebecca West, was published in 1926. This poetry combined the ordinary and the exquisite; it was, as Sandburg himself wrote, "the synthesis of hyacinths and biscuits."

Good Morning, America (1928) is a not always successful unit; lacking integration, it is Sandburg at his best and worst. *The People, Yes* (1936) is a far more comprehensive collection. It assembles folktales, tall stories, catch-phrases, fable, gossip, and history, and presents all of these in a native idiom with a panoramic sweep. Moreover, in *The People, Yes* Sandburg passionately affirms his faith in a broad democracy, a democracy of material and spirit. Never, except in Whitman, has the common man been so celebrated; never has there been a greater understanding of "the people's" wisdom and skepticism, their power and their patience. If, as some critics claim, the book is chiefly a set of statements, it is statement as artfully built as suggestion.

Besides his poetry, Sandburg has written two volumes of homely but highly imaginative short tales for children: *Rootabaga Stories* (1922) and *Rootabaga Pigeons* (1923). Eight years were spent traveling and studying documents for his remarkable *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years* (1926), and assembling material for his collection of folk-tunes *The American Songbag* (1927), which have become standard works.

GRASS

Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo.
Shovel them under and let me work —
I am the grass; I cover all.

And pile them high at Gettysburg
And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun.
Shovel them under and let me work.
Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the conductor:
What place is this?
Where are we now?

I am the grass.
Let me work.

PRAYERS OF STEEL

Lay me on an anvil, O God.
Beat me and hammer me into a crowbar.
Let me pry loose old walls;
Let me lift and loosen old foundations.

Lay me on an anvil, O God.
Beat me and hammer me into a steel spike.
Drive me into the girders that hold a skyscraper together.
Take red-hot rivets and fasten me into the central girders.
Let me be the great nail holding a skyscraper through blue
nights into white stars.

COOL TOMBS

When Abraham Lincoln was shoveled into the tombs, he
forgot the copperheads and the assassin . . . in the
dust, in the cool tombs.

And Ulysses Grant lost all thought of con men and Wall
Street, cash and collateral turned ashes . . . in the
dust, in the cool tombs.

Pocahontas' body, lovely as a poplar, sweet as a red haw in
November or a pawpaw in May, did she wonder? does
she remember? . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs?

Take any streetful of people buying clothes and groceries,
cheering a hero or throwing confetti and blowing tin
horns . . . tell me if the lovers are losers . . . tell me
if any get more than the lovers . . . in the dust . . .
in the cool tombs.

FOG

The fog comes
on little cat feet.
It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

FROM "SMOKE AND STEEL"

Smoke of the fields in spring is one,
Smoke of the leaves in autumn another.
Smoke of a steel-mill roof or a battleship funnel,
They all go up in a line with the smokestack,
Or they twist . . . in the slow twist . . . of the wind.

If the north wind comes they run to the south.
If the west wind comes they run to the east.
By this sign
all smokes
know each other.

Smoke of the fields in spring and leaves in autumn,
Smoke of the finished steel, chilled and blue,
By the oath of work they swear: "I know you."

Hunted and hissed from the center
Deep down long ago when God made us over,
Deep down are the cinders we came from —
You and I and our heads of smoke.

Some of the smokes God dropped on the job
Cross on the sky and count our years
And sing in the secrets of our numbers;
Sing their dawns and sing their evenings,
Sing an old log-fire song:

 You may put the damper up,
 You may put the damper down,
 The smoke goes up the chimney just the same.

Smoke of a city sunset skyline,
Smoke of a country dust horizon —
 They cross on the sky and count our years.

 A bar of steel — it is only
Smoke at the heart of it, smoke and the blood of a man.
A runner of fire ran in it, ran out, ran somewhere else,
And left smoke and the blood of a man
And the finished steel, chilled and blue.

So fire runs in, runs out, runs somewhere else again,
And the bar of steel is a gun, a wheel, a nail, a shovel,
A rudder under the sea, a steering-gear in the sky;
And always dark in the heart and through it,
 Smoke and the blood of a man.

Pittsburgh, Youngstown, Gary — they make their steel with
men.

In the blood of men and the ink of chimneys
The smoke nights write their oaths:
Smoke into steel and blood into steel;
Homestead, Braddock, Birmingham, they make their steel
 with men.
Smoke and blood is the mix of steel.

 The birdmen drone
 In the blue; it is steel
 a motor sings and zooms.

Steel barb-wire around The Works.

Steel guns in the holsters of the guards at the gates of The Works.

Steel ore-boats bring the loads clawed from the earth by steel, lifted and lugged by arms of steel, sung on its way by the clanking clam-shells.

The runners now, the handlers now, are steel; they dig and clutch and haul; they hoist their automatic knuckles from job to job; they are steel making steel.

Fire and dust and air fight in the furnaces; the pour is timed, the billets wriggle; the clinkers are dumped:

Liners on the sea, skyscrapers on the land; diving steel in the sea, climbing steel in the sky.

SMOKE ROSE GOLD

The dome of the capitol looks to the Potomac river.

Out of haze over the sunset,

Out of a smoke rose gold:

One star shines over the sunset.

Night takes the dome and the river, the sun and the smoke rose gold,

The haze changes from sunset to star.

The pour of a thin silver struggles against the dark.

A star might call: It's a long way across.

JAZZ FANTASIA

Drum on your drums, batter on your banjos, sob on the long cool winding saxophones. Go to it, O jazzmen.

Sling your knuckles on the bottoms of the happy tin pans, let your trombones ooze, and go husha-husha-hush with the slippery sandpaper.

Moan like an autumn wind high in the lonesome treetops, moan soft like you wanted somebody terrible, cry like a racing car slipping away from a motorcycle-cop, bang-bang! you jazzmen, bang altogether drums, traps, ban-

jos, horns, tin cans — make two people fight on the top of a stairway and scratch each other's eyes in a clinch tumbling down the stairs.

Can the rough stuff . . . Now a Mississippi steamboat pushes up the night river with a hoo-hoo-hoo-oo . . . and the green lanterns calling to the high soft stars . . . a red moon rides on the humps of the low river hills. . . . Go to it, O jazzmen.

UPSTREAM

The strong men keep coming on.
They go down shot, hanged, sick, broken.
They live on fighting, singing, lucky as plungers.
The strong mothers pulling them on . . .
The strong mothers pulling them from a dark sea, a great prairie, a long mountain.
Call hallelujah, call amen, call deep thanks.
The strong men keep coming on.

LIMITED

I am riding on a limited express, one of the crack trains of the nation.
Hurtling across the prairie into blue haze and dark air go fifteen all-steel coaches holding a thousand people.
(All the coaches shall be scrap and rust and all the men and women laughing in the diners and sleepers shall pass to ashes.)
I ask a man in the smoker where he is going and he answers:
"Omaha."

FINALE

(From "Slabs of the Sunburnt West")

Good night; it is scribbled on the panels
of the cold gray open desert.

Good night; on the big sky blanket over the
Santa Fé trail it is woven in the oldest
Indian blanket songs.

Buffers of land, breakers of sea, say it and
say it, over and over, good night, good night.

Tie your hat to the saddle
and ride, ride, ride, O Rider.
Lay your rails and wires
and ride, ride, ride, O Rider.

The worn tired stars say
you shall die early and die dirty.
The clean cold stars say
you shall die late and die clean.

The runaway stars say
you shall never die at all,
never at all.

WIND SONG

Long ago I learned how to sleep,
In an old apple orchard where the wind swept by counting
its money and throwing it away,
In a wind-gaunt orchard where the limbs forked out and lis-
tened or never listened at all,
In a passel of trees where the branches trapped the wind into
whistling, "Who, who are you?"
I slept with my head in an elbow on a summer afternoon and
there I took a sleep lesson.
There I went away saying: I know why they sleep, I know
how they trap the tricky winds.
Long ago I learned how to listen to the singing wind and how
to forget and how to hear the deep whine,
Slapping and lapsing under the day blue and the night stars:
Who, who are you?

Who can ever forget
listening to the wind go by
counting its money
and throwing it away?

YARNS OF THE PEOPLE

(From "The People, Yes")

- They have yarns
Of a skyscraper so tall they had to put hinges
On the two top stories so to let the moon go by,
Of one corn crop in Missouri when the roots
Went so deep and drew off so much water
The Mississippi riverbed that year was dry,
Of pancakes so thin they had only one side,
Of "a fog so thick we shingled the barn and six feet out on
the fog,"
Of Pecos Pete straddling a cyclone in Texas and riding it to
the west coast where "it rained out under him,"
Of the man who drove a swarm of bees across the Rocky
Mountains and the Desert "and didn't lose a bee,"
Of a mountain railroad curve where the engineer in his cab
can touch the caboose and spit in the conductor's eye,
Of the boy who climbed a cornstalk growing so fast he would
have starved to death if they hadn't shot biscuits up to
him,
Of the old man's whiskers: "When the wind was with him his
whiskers arrived a day before he did,"
Of the hen laying a square egg and cackling, "Ouch!" and
of hens laying eggs with the dates printed on them,
Of the ship captain's shadow: it froze to the deck one cold
winter night,
Of mutineers on that same ship put to chipping rust with
rubber hammers,
Of the sheep-counter who was fast and accurate: "I just
count their feet and divide by four,"
Of the man so tall he must climb a ladder to shave himself,
Of the runt so teeny-weeny it takes two men and a boy to
see him,

Of mosquitoes: one can kill a dog, two of them a man,
Of a cyclone that sucked cookstoves out of the kitchen, up
the chimney flue, and on to the next town,
Of the same cyclone picking up wagon-tracks in Nebraska
and dropping them over in the Dakotas,
Of the hook-and-eye snake unlocking itself into forty pieces,
each piece two inches long, then in nine seconds flat
snapping itself together again,
Of the watch swallowed by the cow: when they butchered
her a year later the watch was running and had the cor-
rect time,
Of horned snakes, hoop snakes that roll themselves where
they want to go, and rattlesnakes carrying bells instead
of rattles on their tails,
Of the herd of cattle in California getting lost in a giant red-
wood tree that had hollowed out,
Of the man who killed a snake by putting its tail in its mouth
so it swallowed itself,
Of railroad trains whizzing along so fast they reached the
station before the whistle,
Of pigs so thin the farmer had to tie knots in their tails to
keep them from crawling through the cracks in their
pens,
Of Paul Bunyan's big blue ox, Babe, measuring between the
eyes forty-two ax-handles and a plug of Star tobacco
exactly,
Of John Henry's hammer and the curve of its swing and his
singing of it as "a rainbow round my shoulder."
They have yarns . . .

ADELAIDE CRAPSEY

Adelaide Crapsey was born, September 9, 1878, at Rochester, New York, where she spent her childhood. She entered Vassar College in 1897, graduating with the class of 1901. In 1905 she went abroad to study archæology in Rome. After her return she taught, but failing health compelled her to discontinue and though she became instructor in Poetics at Smith College in 1911, the burden was too great.

In 1913, after her breakdown, she began to write those brief lines which are so precise and poignant. She was particularly happy in her "Cinquains," a form that she originated. These five-line stanzas in the strictest possible structure (the lines having, respectively, two, four, six, eight, and two syllables) doubtless owe something to the Japanese *hokku*, but Adelaide Crapsey made them her own.

She died at Saranac Lake, New York, on October 8, 1914. Her small volume *Verses* appeared in 1915; part of an unfinished *Study in English Metrics* was posthumously published in 1918.

FOUR CINQUAINS

November Night

Listen . . .
 With faint dry sound,
 Like steps of passing ghosts,
 The leaves, frost-crisp'd, break from the trees
 And fall.

Triad

These be
 Three silent things:
 The falling snow . . . the hour
 Before the dawn . . . the mouth of one
 Just dead.

The Warning

Just now,
 Out of the strange
 Still dusk . . . as strange, as still . . .
 A white moth flew. Why am I grown
 So cold?

Moon Shadows

Still as
 On windless nights
 The moon-cast shadows are,
 So still will be my heart when I
 Am dead.

ON SEEING WEATHER-BEATEN TREES

Is it as plainly in our living shown,
By slant and twist, which way the wind hath blown?

VACHEL LINDSAY

(Nicholas) Vachel Lindsay was born in Springfield, Illinois, November 10, 1879. From the window where Lindsay did most of his writing, he saw many Governors come and go, including the martyred John P. Altgeld, whom he celebrated in "The Eagle that is Forgotten," one of his finest poems. He graduated from Springfield High School, attended Hiram College (1897-1900), studied at the Art Institute at Chicago (1900-3) and at the New York School of Art (1904). After two years of lecturing and settlement work, he took the first of his long tramps, walking through Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas, preaching "the gospel of beauty," and formulating his plans to make others share his creative enthusiasms. He lectured almost continually and traded on his energy, so much so that he wore himself out before he was fifty-three. Exhausted because he lacked the strength to fulfill his vision, he died December 4, 1931.

Like a true revivalist, he attempted to wake in people a response to beauty; a modern Tommy Tucker, he sang, recited and chanted for his supper, distributing a pamphlet entitled "Rhymes to be Traded for Bread." But the audiences he was endeavoring to reach did not hear him, even though his collection *General Booth Enters Into Heaven* (1913) struck many a loud and racy note.

Lindsay broadened his effects, and the following year published *The Congo and Other Poems* (1914), an infectious blend of Lindsay's three R's: Rhyme, Religion, and Ragtime. In the title-poem and, in a lesser degree, the three companion chants, Lindsay struck his most powerful and most popular vein. These gave people that primitive joy in syncopated sound which is at the base of song. They excited audiences and stimulated students. *The Chinese Nightingale* (1917) begins with one of the most whimsical pieces Lindsay has ever devised. And if the subsequent *The Golden Whales of California* (1920) is less distinctive, it is principally because the author has written too much and too speedily to be self-critical. It is his peculiar appraisal of loveliness, the rollicking high spirits joined to a stubborn evangelism, that makes Lindsay so representative a product of his environment.

Collected Poems (1923) is a complete exhibit of Lindsay's best

and worst. That Lindsay lost whatever faculty of self-criticism he may ever have possessed is evidenced by page after page of flat crudities; entire poems proceed with nothing more creative than mere physical energy whipping up a trivial idea. *Going-to-the-Sun* (1924), *Going-to-the-Stars* (1925), and *The Candle in the Cabin* (1926), following each other in too rapid succession, betray Lindsay's loquacity. These volumes are distinguished chiefly by the whimsical drawings which the poet has scattered among the feeble verses.

Much of Lindsay will die; he will not live as either a prophet or a politician. But the vitality which impels the best of his galloping meters will persist; his innocent wildness of imagination, outlasting his naïve programs, will charm even those to whom his brassy declamations (religious at the core) are no longer a novelty. There can be no question about his poetic vitality, originality, or permanence.

Lindsay also embodied his experiences and meditations on the road in two prose volumes, *A Handy Guide for Beggars* (1916) and *Adventures While Preaching the Gospel of Beauty* (1914), as well as an enthusiastic study of the "silent drama," *The Art of the Moving Picture* (1915). A curious document, half rhapsody, half visionary novel, entitled *The Golden Book of Springfield*, appeared in 1920. His biography, *Vachel Lindsay: A Poet in America* (1935), was written by his friend and fellow-poet, Edgar Lee Masters. His tribute to the reformer Altgeld might well have been Lindsay's own epitaph: "Sleep softly . . . eagle forgotten . . ."

THE EAGLE THAT IS FORGOTTEN

(John P. Altgeld. Born December 30, 1847; died March 12, 1902)¹

Sleep softly . . . eagle forgotten . . . under the stone,
Time has its way with you there, and the clay has its own.

"We have buried him now," thought your foes, and in secret rejoiced.

They made a brave show of their mourning, their hatred unvoiced.

They had snarled at you, barked at you, foamed at you, day after day,

Now you were ended. They praised you, . . . and laid you away.

¹ A complete biography of Altgeld did not appear until 1938 when Harry Barnard published "*Eagle Forgotten*": *The Life of John Peter Altgeld*.

The others that mourned you in silence and terror and truth,
The widow bereft of her pittance, the boy without youth,
The mocked and the scorned and the wounded, the lame and
the poor
That should have remembered forever, . . . remember no
more.

Where are those lovers of yours, on what name do they call
The lost, that in armies wept over your funeral pall?
They call on the names of a hundred high-valiant ones,
A hundred white eagles have risen, the sons of your sons,
The zeal in their wings is a zeal that your dreaming began,
The valor that wore out your soul in the service of man.

Sleep softly, . . . eagle forgotten, . . . under the stone,
Time has its way with you there, and the clay has its own.
Sleep on, O brave hearted, O wise man, that kindled the
flame —

To live in mankind is far more than to live in a name,
To live in mankind, far, far more . . . than to live in a
name.

TO A GOLDEN HAired GIRL IN A
LOUISIANA TOWN

You are a sunrise,
If a star should rise instead of the sun.
You are a moonrise,
If a star should come in the place of the moon.
You are the Spring,
If a face should bloom instead of an apple-bough.
You are my love,
If your heart is as kind
As your young eyes now.

THE TRAVELLER

The moon's a devil jester
 Who makes himself too free.
 The rascal is not always
 Where he appears to be.
 Sometimes he is in my heart —
 Sometimes he is in the sea;
 Then tides are in my heart,
 And tides are in the sea.

O traveller, abiding not
 Where he pretends to be!

THE CONGO

(A Study of the Negro Race)

I. Their Basic Savagery

Fat black bucks in a wine-barrel room,
 Barrel-house kings, with feet unstable,
 Sagged and reeled and pounded on the
 table,
 Pounded on the table,
 Beat an empty barrel with the handle of a
 broom,
 Hard as they were able,
 Boom, boom, BOOM,
 With a silk umbrella and the handle of a
 broom,
 Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM.

*A deep rolling
 bass.*

THEN I had religion, THEN I had a vision.
 I could not turn from their revel in de-
 rision.

THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING
 THROUGH THE BLACK,
 CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A
 GOLDEN TRACK.

*More deliberate.
 Solemnly
 chanted.*

Then along that river-bank
 A thousand miles
 Tattooed cannibals danced in files;
 Then I heard the boom of the blood-lust
 song

And a thigh-bone beating on a tin-pan
 gong.

And "BLOOD" screamed the whistles and
 the fifes of the warriors,

"BLOOD" screamed the skull-faced, lean
 witch-doctors,

"Whirl ye the deadly voodoo rattle,

Harry the uplands,

Steal all the cattle,

Rattle-rattle, rattle-rattle,

Bing!

Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, Boom,"

A roaring, epic, rag-time tune

From the mouth of the Congo

To the Mountains of the Moon.

Death is an Elephant,

Torch-eyed and horrible,

Foam-flanked and terrible.

Boom, steal the pygmies,

Boom, kill the Arabs,

Boom, kill the white men,

Hoo, Hoo, Hoo.

Listen to the yell of Leopold's ghost

Burning in Hell for his hand-maimed host.

Hear how the demons chuckle and yell.

Cutting his hands off, down in Hell.

Listen to the creepy proclamation,

Blown through the lairs of the forest-
 nation,

Blown past the white-ants' hill of clay,

Blown past the marsh where the butterflies
 play:—

"Be careful what you do,

Or Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo,

*A rapidly
 piling climax
 of speed and
 racket.*

*With a philo-
 sophic pause.*

*Shrilly and
 with a heavily
 accented
 meter.*

*Like the wind
 in the chimney.*

And all of the other
 Gods of the Congo,
 Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
 Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
 Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you."

*All the o sounds
 very golden.
 Heavy accents
 very heavy.
 Light accents
 very light. Last
 line whispered.*

II. Their Irrepressible High Spirits

Wild crap-shooters with a whoop and a call
 Danced the juba in their gambling-hall
 And laughed fit to kill, and shook the town,
 And geyed the policemen and laughed
 them down
 With a boomlay, boomlay, boomlay,
 BOOM. . . .
 THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING
 THROUGH THE BLACK,
 CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A
 GOLDEN TRACK.

*Rather shrill
 and high.*

*Read exactly as
 in first section.*

A Negro fairyland swung into view,
 A minstrel river
 Where dreams come true.
 The ebony palace soared on high
 Through the blossoming trees to the eve-
 ning sky.
 The inlaid porches and casement shone
 With gold and ivory and elephant-bone.
 And the black crowd laughed till their sides
 were sore
 At the baboon butler in the agate door,
 And the well-known tunes of the parrot
 band
 That trilled on the bushes of that magic
 land.

*Lay emphasis
 on the delicate
 ideas. Keep as
 light-footed as
 possible.*

A troupe of skull-faced witch-men came
 Through the agate doorway in suits of
 flame,

With pomposity.

Yea, long-tailed coats with a gold-leaf crust
And hats that were covered with diamond-
dust.

And the crowd in the court gave a whoop
and a call

And danced the juba from wall to wall.

But the witch-men suddenly stilled the
throng

With a stern cold glare, and a stern old
song:—

“Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.” . . .

Just then from the doorway, as fat as shotes,
Came the cake-walk princes in their long
red coats,

Shoes with a patent-leather shine,

And tall silk hats that were red as wine.

And they pranced with their butterfly part-
ners there,

Coal-black maidens with pearls in their
hair,

Knee-skirts trimmed with the jessamine
sweet,

And bells on their ankles and little black
feet.

And the couples railed at the chant and
the frown

Of the witch-men lean, and laughed them
down.

(O rare was the revel and well worth
while

That made those glowering witch-men
smile.)

The cake-walk royalty then began

To walk for a cake that was tall as a man
To the tune of “Boomlay, boomlay,
BOOM,”

While the witch-men laughed with a sin-
ister air,

*With a great
deliberation and
ghastliness.*

*With overwhelm-
ing assurance,
good cheer, and
pomp.*

*With growing
speed and
sharply marked
dance-rhythm.*

And sang with the scalawags prancing
there:—

“Walk with care, walk with care,
Or Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo,
And all of the other
Gods of the Congo,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.
Beware, beware, walk with care,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay,
BOOM.”

Oh, rare was the revel, and well worth
while

That made those glowering witch-men
smile.

*With a touch of
Negro dialect,
and
as rapidly as
possible toward
the end.*

*Slow philo-
sophic calm.*

III. The Hope of Their Religion

A good old Negro in the slums of the
town

Preached at a sister for her velvet gown.

Howled at a brother for his low-down
ways,

His prowling, guzzling, sneak-thief days.

Beat on the Bible till he wore it out,

Starting the jubilee revival shout.

And some had visions, as they stood on
chairs,

And sang of Jacob, and the golden stairs,

And they all repented, a thousand strong,

From their stupor and savagery and sin
and wrong

And slammed their hymn books till they
shook the room

With “Glory, glory, glory,”

And “Boom, boom, BOOM.”

*Heavy base.
With a literal
imitation of
camp-meeting
racket, and
trance.*

THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING
THROUGH THE BLACK,

*Exactly as in
the first section.*

CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A
GOLDEN TRACK.

And the gray sky opened like a new-rent
veil

And showed the apostles with their coats
of mail.

In bright white steel they were seated
round

And their fire-eyes watched where the
Congo wound.

And the twelve apostles, from their thrones
on high,

Thrilled all the forest with their heavenly
cry: —

"Mumbo-Jumbo will die in the jungle;

Never again will he hoo-doo you,

Never again will he hoo-doo you."

*Sung to the
tune of "Hark,
ten thousand
harps and
voices."*

Then along that river-bank, a thousand
miles,

The vine-snared trees fell down in files.

Pioneer angels cleared the way

For a Congo paradise, for babes at play,

For sacred capitals, for temples clean.

Gone were the skull-faced witch-men lean.

There, where the wild ghost-gods had
wailed

A million boats of the angels sailed

With oars of silver, and prows of blue

And silken pennants that the sun shone
through.

'Twas a land transfigured, 'twas a new
creation,

Oh, a singing wind swept the Negro nation;

And on through the backwoods clearing
flew: —

"Mumbo-Jumbo is dead in the jungle.

Never again will he hoo-doo you.

Never again will he hoo-doo you."

*With growing
deliberation
and joy.*

*In a rather
high key — as
delicately as
possible.*

*To the tune of
"Hark, ten
thousand harps
and voices."*

Redeemed were the forests, the beasts and
 the men,
 And only the vulture dared again
 By the far, lone mountains of the moon
 To cry, in the silence, the Congo tune: —
 "Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.
 Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
 Mumbo . . . Jumbo . . . will . . . hoo-doo
 . . . you."

*Dying off
 into a pene-
 trating,
 terrified
 whisper.*

WHEN LINCOLN CAME TO SPRINGFIELD

When Lincoln came to Springfield,
 In the ancient days,
 Queer were the streets and sketchy,
 And he was in a mazē.

Leaving log cabins behind him,
 For the mud streets of this place,
 Sorrow for Anne Rutledge
 Burned in his face.

He threw his muddy saddle bags
 On Joshua Speed's floor,
 He took off his old hat,
 He looked around the store.

He shook the long hair
 On his bison-head,
 He sat down on the counter,
 "Speed, I've moved," he said.

THE APPLE-BARREL OF JOHNNY APPLESEED

On the mountain peak, called "Going-To-The-Sun,"
 I saw gray Johnny Appleseed at prayer
 Just as the sunset made the old earth fair.
 Then darkness came; in an instant, like great smoke,
 The sun fell down as though its great hoops broke

And dark rich apples, poured from the dim flame
Where the sun set, came rolling toward the peak,
A storm of fruit, a mighty cider-reek,
The perfume of the orchards of the world,
From apple-shadows: red and russet domes
That turned to clouds of glory and strange homes
Above the mountain tops for cloud-born souls: —
Reproofs for men who build the world like moles,
Models for men, if they would build the world
As Johnny Appleseed would have it done —
Praying, and reading the books of Swedenborg
On the mountain top called "Going-To-The-Sun."

JOHN G. NEIHARDT

John Gneisenau Neihardt was born in Sharpsburg, Illinois, January 8, 1881. He completed a scientific course at Nebraska Normal College in 1897 and lived among the Omaha Indians for six years, studying their customs, characteristics, and legends.

Although he had already published two books, *A Bundle of Myrrh* (1908) was his first volume to attract notice. It was full of enthusiasm and an insistent virility, qualities which were extended in *Man-Song* (1909). Neihardt found a new restraint in *The Stranger at the Gate* (1911). The best of the lyrics from all three volumes appeared in *The Quest* (1916).

Neihardt meanwhile had studied native folk-lore, the results of which appeared in *The Song of Hugh Glass* (1915), *The Song of Three Friends* (1919), *The Song of the Indian Wars* (1926). These three of Neihardt's are detailed long poems, part of a projected epic series celebrating the winning of the West by the pioneers. *The Song of the Messiah* (1935), the most vivid as well as the most symbolic of the cycle, was the fourth of the series to be published.

CRY OF THE PEOPLE

Tremble before thy chattels,
Lords of the scheme of things!
Fighters of all earth's battles,
Ours is the might of kings!

Guided by seers and sages,
The world's heart-beat for a drum,
Snapping the chains of ages,
Out of the night we come!

Lend us no ear that pities!
Offer no almoner's hand!
Alms for the builders of cities!
When will you understand?
Down with your pride of birth
And your golden gods of trade!
A man is worth to his mother, Earth,
All that a man has made!

We are the workers and makers.
We are no longer dumb!
Tremble, O Shirkers and Takers!
Sweeping the earth — we come!
Ranked in the world-wide dawn,
Marching into the day!
The night is gone and the sword is drawn
And the scabbard is thrown away!

LET ME LIVE OUT MY YEARS

Let me live out my years in heat of blood!
Let me die drunken with the dreamer's wine!
Let me not see this soul-house built of mud
Go toppling to the dust — a vacant shrine.

Let me go quickly, like a candle light
Snuffed out just at the heyday of its glow.
Give me high noon — and let it then be night!
Thus would I go.

And grant that when I face the grisly Thing,
My song may trumpet down the gray Perhaps-
Let me be as a tune-swept fiddlestring
That feels the Master Melody — and snaps!

Franklin Pierce Adams, better known as F. P. A., was born in Chicago, Illinois, November 15, 1881. He attended the University of Michigan (1899-1900) and, after a brief career as insurance agent, plunged into journalism. He conducted columns on several New York newspapers and published many volumes of dexterous light verse. Of these the best are *Tobogganing on Parnassus* (1917) and *Christopher Columbus* (1930). *Our Own Samuel Pepys* (1935) is a prose portrait of the author, his background, and his times. *The Melancholy Lute* (1936) is a selection of his most popular verses.

THOSE TWO BOYS

When Bill was a lad he was terribly bad.
He worried his parents a lot;
He'd lie and he'd swear and pull little girls' hair;
His boyhood was naught but a blot.

At play and in school he would fracture each rule —
In mischief from autumn to spring;
And the villagers knew when to manhood he grew
He would never amount to a thing.

When Jim was a child he was not very wild;
He was known as a good little boy;
He was honest and bright and the teacher's delight —
To his mother and father a joy.

All the neighbors were sure that his virtue'd endure,
That his life would be free of a spot;
They were certain that Jim had a great head on him
And that Jim would amount to a lot.

And Jim grew to manhood and honor and fame
And bears a good name;
While Bill is shut up in a dark prison cell —
You never can tell.

Witter Bynner was born at Brooklyn, New York, August 10, 1881. He was graduated from Harvard in 1902 and has been assistant editor of various periodicals as well as adviser to publishers.

Between his twenty-fifth and his fiftieth year Bynner wrote a dozen volumes of poetry, poetic plays, and parodies. *Grenstone Poems* (1917) is the best collection of his lyrics, *The Jade Mountain* (1929) is a collaboration of poems from the Chinese, and *Eden Tree* (1931), an autobiographical fantasy, is his ripest and most ambitious work. His *Selected Poems* appeared in 1937.

A FARMER REMEMBERS LINCOLN

"Lincoln? —

Well, I was in the old Second Maine,
The first regiment in Washington from the Pine Tree State.
Of course I didn't get the butt of the clip;
We was there for guardin' Washington —
We was all green.

"I ain't never ben to the theayter in my life —
I didn't know how to behave.
I ain't never ben since.
I can see as plain as my hat the box where he sat in
When he was shot.
I can tell you, sir, there was a panic
When we found our President was in the shape he was in!
Never saw a soldier in the world but what liked him.

"Yes, sir. His looks was kind o' hard to forget.
He was a spare man,
An old farmer.
Everything was all right, you know,
But he wasn't a smooth-appearin' man at all —
Not in no ways;
Thin-faced, long-necked,
And a swellin' kind of a thick lip like.

" And he was a jolly old fellow — always cheerful;
He wasn't so high but the boys could talk to him their own
ways.

While I was servin' at the Hospital
He'd come in and say, ' You look nice in here,'
Praise us up, you know.

And he'd bend over and talk to the boys —

And he'd talk so good to 'em — so close —

That's why I call him a farmer.

I don't mean that everything about him wasn't all right, you
understand,

It's just — well, I was a farmer —

And he was my neighbor, anybody's neighbor.

I guess even you young folks would 'a' liked him."

A MOCKING BIRD

An arrow, feathery, alive,

He darts and sings —

Then, with a sudden skimming dive

Of stripèd wings,

He finds a pine and, debonair,

Makes with his mate

All birds that ever rested there

Articulate.

The whisper of a multitude

Of happy wings

Is round him, a returning brood,

Each time he sings.

Though Heaven be not for them or him

Yet he is wise,

And tiptoes daily on the rim

Of Paradise.

James Oppenheim was born at St. Paul, Minnesota, May 24, 1882. Two years later his family moved to New York City, where he lived until his death in 1932. After a public school education, he took special courses at Columbia University, engaged in settlement work, and acted in the capacity of assistant head worker of the Hudson Guild Settlement.

Oppenheim's initial venture as a poet, *Monday Morning and Other Poems* (1909), was a tentative collection, half imitative, half experimental. In spite of its indebtedness to Whitman, most of the verses are in formal meters and regular (though ragged) rhyme.

In *Songs for the New Age* (1914) and *War and Laughter* (1916) the notes are fuller; we listen to a speech that, echoing Whitman's sonority, develops a music strangely Biblical and yet local. This volume, like all Oppenheim's subsequent work (*The Book of Self*, 1917, *The Mystic Warrior*, 1921), is analysis in terms of poetry, a slow searching that attempts to diagnose the soul of man and the twisted times he lives in. The old Isaiah note, with a new introspection, rises out of such poems as "The Slave," "Tasting the Earth"; the music and imagery of the Psalms are heard in "The Flocks" and "The Runner in the Skies."

The Sea, Oppenheim's most comprehensive volume, was published in 1923. It includes the best of all his previous books of poetry with the addition of several "connecting" verses. Besides his poetry, Oppenheim published several volumes of short stories, five novels, a book on psychoanalysis, and two poetic plays. During 1916-17 he was editor of that stimulating but short-lived magazine, *The Seven Arts*.

THE SLAVE

They set the slave free, striking off his chains . . .
Then he was as much of a slave as ever.

He was still chained to servility,
He was still manacled to indolence and sloth,
He was still bound by fear and superstition,
By ignorance, suspicion, and savagery . . .
His slavery was not in the chains,
But in himself. . . .

They can only set free men free . . .
And there is no need of that:
Free men set themselves free.

THE RUNNER IN THE SKIES

Who is the runner in the skies,
With her blowing scarf of stars,
And our Earth and sun hovering like bees about her blossom-
ing heart?
Her feet are on the winds, where space is deep,
Her eyes are nebulous and veiled;
She hurries through the night to a far lover . . .

THE LINCOLN CHILD

Clearing in the forest,
In the wild Kentucky forest,
And the stars, wintry stars, strewn above!
O Night that is the starriest
Since Earth began to roll —
For a Soul
Is born out of Love!
Mother love, father love, love of eternal God —
Stars have pushed aside to let him through —
Through heaven's sun-sown deeps
One sparkling ray of God
Strikes the clod —
(And while an angel-host through wood and clearing
sweeps!)

Born in the wild
The Child —
Naked, ruddy, new,
Wakes with the piteous human cry and at the mother-heart
sleeps.

To the mother wild berries and honey,
To the father awe without end,
To the child a swaddling of flannel —
And a dawn rolls sharp and sunny
And the skies of winter bend
To see the first sweet word penned
In the godliest human annal.

Soon in the wide wilderness,
On a branch blown over a creek,
Up a trail of the wild coon,
In a lair of the wild bee,
The rugged boy, by danger's stress,
Learnt the speech the wild things speak,
Learnt the Earth's eternal tune
Of strife-engendered harmony —
Went to school where Life itself was master,
Went to church where Earth was minister —
And in Danger and Disaster
Felt his future manhood stir!

And lo, as he grew ugly, gaunt,
And gnarled his way into a man,
What wisdom came to feed his want,
What worlds came near to let him scan!
And as he fathomed through and through
Our dark and sorry human scheme,
He knew what Shakespeare never knew,
What Dante never dared to dream —
That men are one
Beneath the sun,
And before God are equal souls —
This truth was his,
And this it is
That round him such a glory rolls.
For not alone he knew it as a truth,
He made it of his blood, and of his brain —
He crowned it on the day when piteous Booth
Sent a whole land to weeping with world pain —
When a black cloud blotted out the sun
And men stopped in the streets to sob,
To think Old Abe was dead.
Dead, and the day's work still undone,
Dead, and war's ruining heart athrob,
And earth with fields of carnage freshly spread.
Millions died fighting;
But in this man we mourned

Those millions, and one other —
And the States today uniting,
North and South,
East and West,
Speak with a people's mouth
A rhapsody of rest
To him our beloved best,
Our big, gaunt, homely brother —
Our huge Atlantic coast-storm in a shawl,
Our cyclone in a smile — our President,
Who knew and loved us all
With love more eloquent
Than his own words — with Love that in real deeds was
spent. . . .

Oh, to pour love through deeds —
To be as Lincoln was! —
That all the land might fill its daily needs
Glorified by a human Cause!
Then were America a vast World-Torch
Flaming a faith across the dying Earth,
Proclaiming from the Atlantic's rocky porch,
That a New World was struggling at the birth!
O living God, O Thou who living art
And real, and near, draw, as at that babe's birth,
Into our souls and sanctify our Earth —
Let down thy strength that we endure
Mighty and pure
As mothers and fathers of our own Lincoln-child. . . .
O Child, flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone,
Soul torn from out our Soul!
May you be great, and pure, and beautiful —
A Soul to search this world
To be a father, brother, comrade, son,
A toiler powerful;
A man whose toil is done
One with God's Law above:
Work wrought through Love!

Alfred Kreymborg was born in New York City, December 10, 1883. His education was spasmodic, his childhood being spent beneath the roar of the Elevated trains. At ten he was an expert chess player; he supported himself from the age of seventeen to twenty-five by teaching and playing exhibition games. At thirty, he turned to the theater as a medium.

In 1914, he organized that group of poets which, half-deprecatingly, half-defiantly, called itself "Others." (He edited three anthologies of their work published in 1916, 1917, and 1919.) Meanwhile, he had been working on a technique that was an attempt to strip poetry of its wordiness and rhetorical nonessentials. *Mushrooms* (1916) was the first collection in this vein. Here Kreymborg continually sought for simplification, cutting away at his lines until they assumed an almost naked expression. Often he overdid his effects, attaining nothing more than a childish prettiness.

Blood of Things (1920) and *Scarlet and Mellow* (1927) are the work not only of an apt conjurer but a serious thinker. Humor is in these pages, but it is humor lifted. Here, in spite of what seems a persistence of occasional affectations, is a sensitive imagination. *Puppet Plays* appeared in 1923. Although Kreymborg's marionette-like emotions are often too doll-charming or too doll-tragic, these miniature dramas are appealing. However, nothing which Kreymborg had written had prepared his readers for the volume which appeared a few months later. *Less Lonely* (1923) is partly in the idiom which the poet has made his own, but most of the volume is in the shape of conventional verse; there are even thirty orthodox sonnets. These formalities stood him in good stead in *Funnybone Alley* (1927) which combined quaint prose with city jingles for children. *The Lost Sail* (1928) is a loose journal in which the sonnets suffer from long drawn-out casualness; the technique is clumsy, the presentation inadequate. *Manhattan Men* (1929) is a compromise between Kreymborg's first and later manners.

As a chronicler, Kreymborg has written part of his autobiography in *Troubadour* (1925). *Our Singing Strength* (1929) is a categorical outline of American poetry from Colonial times to the present, and *Lyric America* (1932) is a fairly orthodox compilation.

OLD MANUSCRIPT

The sky
is that beautiful old parchment
in which the sun

and the moon
keep their diary.
To read it all,
one must be a linguist
more learned than Father Wisdom
and a visionary
more clairvoyant than Mother Dream.
But to feel it,
one must be an apostle:
one who is more than intimate
in having been, always,
the only confidant —
like the earth
or the sea.

THE DITTY THE CITY SANG

If a lad's but a lad in the heart of a town,
Is it mad he has grown, or a dunce or a clown,
When he crowns common sights with delights of his own?

He thought he saw ships at the end of the street
With songs that the wind taught the sails to repeat.
But washlines have nothing like ships on their feet.

He thought he saw figures and faces you miss
Coming back to embracing no more than a kiss.
Can the rain that leaves puddles be peopled with this?

He thought he heard bells where the clouds break in two,
With a tone quite as low and clear as it's blue.
But what he heard there not a cloud ever knew.

He thought he touched fingers belonging to kings,
And the crowns and the scepters came tumbling in rings.
But all he felt there is how poverty sings.

CITY SPARROW

Who's that dusty stranger? What's he doing here?
That city-bred bird with the ill-bred leer?

Perching on branches like telegraph wires?
Chirping his slang above passionate fires?

Poking his head about, twitching his tail,
Getting drunk in our pools as if they were ale?

Never accepting, but stealing our rations?
Acting toward us as he would to relations?

Who asked him hither, what led him this way?
With his critical carping, his mockery, eh?

And worse than all these, he's a jerky reminder
Of winters, of towns, and of people no kinder.

IMPROVISATION

Wind:
Why do you play
that long beautiful adagio,
that archaic air,
tonight.
Will it never end?
Or is it the beginning,
some prelude you seek?

Is it a tale you strum?
Yesterday, yesterday —
Have you no more for us?

Wind:
Play on.
There is nor hope
nor mutiny
in you.

BADGER CLARK

Badger Clark was born at Albia, Iowa, in 1883. He moved to Dakota Territory at the age of three months and now lives in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Clark is one of the few who have lived to see their work become part of folk-lore; many of his songs have been adapted and paraphrased by the cowboys who have made them their own. *Sun and Saddle Leather* (1915) and *Grass-Grown Trails* (1917) are the expression of a native singer; happy, spontaneous, and seldom "literary." There is wind in these songs; camp-smoke and the colors of prairie sunsets rise from them. Free, for the most part, from affectations, Clark achieves great ease in the vigorous vernacular.

THE GLORY TRAIL

'Way high up the Mogollons,¹
Among the mountain tops,
A lion cleaned a yearlin's bones
And licked his thankful chops,
When on the picture who should ride,
A-trippin' down a slope,
But High-Chin Bob, with sinful pride
And mav'rick-hungry rope.

"Oh, glory be to me," says he,
"And fame's unfadin' flowers!
All meddlin' hands are far away;
I ride my good top-hawse today
And I'm top-rope of the Lazy J —
Hi! kitty cat, you're ours!"

¹ Pronounced Moki6nes.

That lion licked his paw so brown
And dreamed soft dreams of veal —
And then the circlin' loop sung down
And roped him 'round his meal.
He yowled quick fury to the world
Till all the hills yelled back;
The top-hawse gave a snort and whirled
And Bob caught up the slack.

*"Oh, glory be to me," laughs he.
"We've hit the glory trail.
No human man as I have read
Darst loop a ragin' lion's head,
Nor ever hawse could drag one dead
Until we've told the tale."*

'Way high up the Mogollons,
That top-hawse done his best,
Through whippin' brush and rattlin' stones,
From canyon-floor to crest.
But ever when Bob turned and hoped
A limp remains to find,
A red-eyed lion, belly-roped
But healthy, loped behind.

*"Oh, glory be to me," grunts he.
"This glory trail is rough,
Yet even till the Judgment Morn
I'll keep this dally 'round the horn,
For never any hero born
Could stop to holler: 'Nuff!'"*

Three suns had rode their circle home
Beyond the desert's rim,
And turned their star-herds loose to roam
The ranges high and dim;
Yet up and down and 'round and 'cross
Bob pounded, weak and wan,

For pride still glued him to his hawse
And glory drove him on.

"Oh, glory be to me," sighs he.

*"He kaint be drug to death,
But now I know beyond a doubt
Them heroes I have read about
Was only fools that stuck it out
To end of mortal breath."*

'Way high up the Mogollons
A prospect man did swear
That moonbeams melted down his bones
And hoisted up his hair:
A ribby cow-hawse thundered by,
A lion trailed along,
A rider ga'nt but chin on high,
Yelled out a crazy song.

"Oh, glory be to me!" cries he,

*"And to my noble noose!
Oh, stranger, tell my pards below
I took a rampin' dream in tow,
And if I never lay him low,
I'll never turn him loose!"*

SARA TEASDALE

Sara Teasdale was born August 8, 1884, at St. Louis, Missouri, and educated there. After leaving school, she traveled abroad, married, and moved to New York in 1916. Living in seclusion, she became ill and died suddenly January 28, 1933.

Her first book was a slight volume, *Sonnets to Duse* (1907), giving little promise of the rich lyricism which was to follow but containing interesting experiments in strict forms. *Helen of Troy and Other Poems* (1911) contains the first hints of that delicate craftsmanship which, later, were brought to such a high pitch.

Rivers to the Sea (1915) emphasizes this poet's epigrammatic skill. The collection contains at least a dozen lyrics in which the words

seem to fall into place without art or effort. Seldom employing metaphor or striking imagery, almost bare of ornament, these poems have the magic of folk-song. Theirs is an artlessness that is an art.

Love Songs (1917) is a collection of Miss Teasdale's previous melodies with several new tunes. *Flame and Shadow* (1920) and the more autumnal *Dark of the Moon* (1926) are, however, the best of her books. Here the beauty is fuller and deeper; an almost mystic radiance plays from these starry verses. Technically, these volumes mark Miss Teasdale's greatest advance. The words are chosen with a keener sense of their actual as well as their musical values; the rhythms are much more subtle and varied.

Strange Victory (1933) is Sara Teasdale's posthumous volume. The poems are sad but not sentimental; though death overshadows the book there is never the cry of frustration nor the melodrama of dying. As in the later lyrics the lines are direct, the emotion unwhipped; the beauty is in the restraint, the compression into essential spirit, into a last serenity. A comprehensive *Selected Poems* appeared in 1937.

Besides her verse, Miss Teasdale had compiled an anthology, *The Answering Voice* (1917), love lyrics by women, and a collection for children, *Rainbow Gold* (1922).

SPRING NIGHT

The park is filled with night and fog,
The veils are drawn about the world,
The drowsy lights along the paths
Are dim and pearled.

Gold and gleaming the empty streets,
Gold and gleaming the misty lake.
The mirrored lights like sunken swords,
Glimmer and shake.

Oh, is it not enough to be
Here with this beauty over me?
My throat should ache with praise, and I
Should kneel in joy beneath the sky.
O beauty, are you not enough?
Why am I crying after love
With youth, a singing voice, and eyes
To take earth's wonder with surprise?

Why have I put off my pride,
Why am I unsatisfied, —
I, for whom the pensive night
Binds her cloudy hair with light, —
I, for whom all beauty burns
Like incense in a million urns?
O beauty, are you not enough?
Why am I crying after love?

SPRING BLUETS

Bluets that herald spring
Wither when May is dead —
So do the songs I sing
(Bluets that herald spring).
Why did you bid me bring
Posies long garlanded?
Bluets that herald spring
Wither when May is dead.

THE HOUSE OF DREAMS

I built a little house of dreams,
And fenced it all about,
But still I heard the wind of truth
That roared without.

I laid a fire of memories
And sat before the glow,
But through the chinks and round the door
The wind would blow.

I left the house, for all the night
I heard the wind of truth;
I followed where it seemed to lead
Through all my youth.

But when I sought the house of dreams,
To creep within and die,
The wind of truth had leveled it,
And passed it by.

I SHALL NOT CARE

When I am dead and over me bright April
Shakes out her rain-drenched hair,
Though you should lean above me broken-hearted,
I shall not care.

I shall have peace, as leafy trees are peaceful
When rain bends down the bough;
And I shall be more silent and cold-hearted
Than you are now.

NIGHT SONG AT AMALFI

I asked the heaven of stars
What should I give my love —
It answered me with silence,
Silence above.

I asked the darkened sea
Down where the fishermen go —
It answered me with silence,
Silence below.

Oh, I could give him weeping,
Or I could give him song —
But how can I give silence
My whole life long?

WATER LILIES

If you have forgotten water lilies floating
On a dark lake among mountains in the afternoon shade,
If you have forgotten their wet, sleepy fragrance,
Then you can return and not be afraid.

But if you remember, then turn away forever
To the plains and the prairies where pools are far apart,
There you will not come at dusk on closing water lilies,
And the shadow of mountains will not fall on your heart.

TWO SONGS FOR SOLITUDE

The Crystal Gazer

I shall gather myself into myself again,
I shall take my scattered selves and make them one,
I shall fuse them into a polished crystal ball
Where I can see the moon and the flashing sun.

I shall sit like a sibyl, hour after hour intent,
Watching the future come and the present go —
And the little shifting pictures of people rushing
In tiny self-importance to and fro.

The Solitary

Let them think I love them more than I do,
Let them think I care, though I go alone,
If it lifts their pride, what is it to me
Who am self-complete as a flower or a stone?

It is one to me that they come or go
If I have myself and the drive of my will,
And strength to climb on a summer night
And watch the stars swarm over the hill.

My heart has grown rich with the passing of years,
I have less need now than when I was young
To share myself with every comer,
Or shape my thoughts into words with my tongue.

Elinor (Hoyt) Wylie was born September 7, 1885, in Somerville, New Jersey, but she was, she often protested, of pure Pennsylvania stock. Her girlhood was spent in Washington; the family was a literary one, and it was soon evident that Elinor, the first horn, was a prodigy. The facts of her life, if not the personal sufferings, have been recorded by Nancy Hoyt, her younger sister, in *Elinor Wylie: The Portrait of an Unknown Woman* (1935).

It was in England that her first work was published, a tiny book of forty-three pages entitled *Incidental Numbers* (1912), privately printed and unsigned. It is a tentative collection and she was so sensitive about its "incredible immaturity" that she pleaded with the few who knew of its existence never to refer to it until after her death. Much of it is immature, since it was written in her early twenties and her teens. Yet her characteristic touch — the firm thought matched by the firmly molded line — is already suggested.

She returned to America in 1916, and lived in Boston and Maine. Her poems began to appear in the magazines; she moved to Washington. In 1921 her first "real" volume, *Nets to Catch the Wind*, appeared. It was an instant success. Three years later she was a famous person, the author of two volumes of poems and an extraordinary first novel (*Jennifer Lorn*), married to William Rose Benét, and part of the literary life of New York.

Nets to Catch the Wind impresses immediately because of its brilliance. The brilliance is one which, at first, seems to sparkle without burning. But if the poet seldom allows her verses to grow agitated, she never permits them to remain dull. As a technician, she is always admirable; in "August" the sense of heat is conveyed by tropic luxuriance and contrast; in "The Eagle and the Mole" she lifts didacticism to a proud level. Her auditory effects are scarcely less remarkable; never has snow-silence been more unerringly communicated than in "Velvet Shoes."

Black Armour (1923) exhibits Mrs. Wylie's keenness against a mellower background. The intellect has grown more fiery, the mood has grown warmer, and the craftsmanship is more dazzling than ever. *Trivial Breath* (1928) is the work of a poet in transition. At times the craftsman is uppermost; at times the creative genius. *Angels and Earthly Creatures* (1929) is the very peak of her poetry; a physical beauty and spiritual intensity lift this work above anything the poet had previously written. The whole book is a kind of valedictory, sad and noble. The poet seemed to have a premonition of death; on December 15, 1928, she put her final book together, affixed the motto on the title page, and prepared the last detail for the printer. She died the following day.

A sumptuous *Collected Poems of Elinor Wylie* (1932) was followed by *Collected Prose of Elinor Wylie* (1933), which contains her novels, with the fine-spun filigree of *Jennifer Lorn* and the delicate fantasy of *The Venetian Glass Nephew*, as well as her short stories and essays. But it is as a poet that Elinor Wylie excelled and it is as a poet that she will be remembered.

VELVET SHOES

Let us walk in the white snow
In a soundless space;
With footsteps quiet and slow,
At a tranquil pace,
Under veils of white lace.

I shall go shod in silk,
And you in wool,
White as a white cow's milk,
More beautiful
Than the breast of a gull.

We shall walk through the still town
In a windless peace;
We shall step upon white down,
Upon silver fleece,
Upon softer than these.

We shall walk in velvet shoes:
Wherever we go
Silence will fall like dews
On white silence below.
We shall walk in the snow.

THE EAGLE AND THE MOLE

Avoid the reeking herd,
Shun the polluted flock,
Live like that stoic bird,
The eagle of the rock.

The huddled warmth of crowds
Begets and fosters hate;
He keeps, above the clouds,
His cliff inviolate.

When flocks are folded warm,
And herds to shelter run,
He sails above the storm,
He stares into the sun.

If in the eagle's track
Your sinews cannot leap,
Avoid the lathered pack,
Turn from the steaming sheep.

If you would keep your soul
From spotted sight or sound,
Live like the velvet mole;
Go burrow underground.

And there hold intercourse
With roots of trees and stones,
With rivers at their source,
And disembodied bones.

PEGASUS LOST

And there I found a gray and ancient ass,
With dull glazed stare, and stubborn wrinkled smile,
Sardonic, mocking my wide-eyed amaze.
A clumsy hulking form in that white place
At odds with the small stable, cleanly, Greek,
The marble manger and the golden oats.
With loathing hands I felt the ass's side,
Solidly real and hairy to the touch.
Then knew I that I dreamed not, but saw truth;
And knowing, wished I still might hope I dreamed.
The door stood wide, I went into the air.

The day was blue and filled with rushing wind,
A day to ride high in the heavens and taste
The glory of the gods who tread the stars.
Up in the mighty purity I saw
A flashing shape that gladly sprang aloft —
My little Pegasus, like a far white bird
Seeking sun-regions, never to return.
Silently then I turned my steps about,
Entered the stable, saddled the slow ass;
Then on its back I journeyed dustily
Between sun-wilted hedgerows into town.

SEA LULLABY

The old moon is tarnished
With smoke of the flood,
The dead leaves are varnished
With color like blood,

A treacherous smiler
With teeth white as milk,
A savage beguiler
In sheathings of silk,

The sea creeps to pillage,
She leaps on her prey;
A child of the village
Was murdered today.

She came up to meet him
In a smooth golden cloak,
She choked him and beat him
To death, for a joke.

Her bright locks were tangled,
She shouted for joy,
With one hand she strangled
A strong little boy.

Now in silence she lingers
Beside him all night
To wash her long fingers
In silvery light.

PURITAN SONNET

Down to the Puritan marrow of my bones
There's something in this richness that I hate.
I love the look, austere, immaculate,
Of landscapes drawn in pearly monotonies.
There's something in my very blood that owns
Bare hills, cold silver on a sky of slate,
A thread of water, churned to milky spate
Streaming through slanted pastures fenced with stones.

I love those skies, thin blue or snowy gray,
Those fields sparse-planted, rendering meager sheaves;
That spring, briefer than apple-blossom's breath;
Summer, so much too beautiful to stay;
Swift autumn, like a bonfire of leaves;
And sleepy winter, like the sleep of death.

AUGUST

Why should this Negro insolently stride
Down the red noonday on such noiseless feet?
Piled in his barrow, tawnier than wheat,
Lie heaps of smoldering daisies, somber-eyed,
Their copper petals shriveled up with pride,
Hot with a superfluity of heat,
Like a great brazier borne along the street
By captive leopards, black and burning pied.

Are there no water-lilies, smooth as cream,
With long stems dripping crystal? Are there none
Like those white lilies, luminous and cool,

Plucked from some hemlock-darkened northern stream
By fair-haired swimmers, diving where the sun
Scarce warms the surface of the deepest pool?

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

My body is weary to death of my mischievous brain;
I am weary for ever and ever of being brave;
Therefore I crouch on my knees while the cool white rain
Curves the clover over my head like a wave.

The stem and the frosty seed of the grass are ripe;
I have devoured their strength; I have drunk them deep;
And the dandelion is gall in a thin green pipe,
But the clover is honey and sun and the smell of sleep.

EZRA POUND

Ezra (Loomis) Pound was born at Hailey, Idaho, October 30, 1885. He attended Hamilton College and the University of Pennsylvania and went abroad, seeking fresh material to complete a thesis on Lope de Vega, in 1908. It was in Venice that Pound's first book, *A Lume Spento* (1908), was printed. The following year Pound went to London and the chief poems of the little volume were incorporated in *Personæ* (1909), a small collection containing some of Pound's finest work.

Although the young American was a total stranger to the English literary world, his book made a definite impression on critics of all shades. Edward Thomas, the English poet and a careful critic, wrote, "The beauty of it is the beauty of passion, sincerity and intensity, not of beautiful words and suggestions. . . . The thought dominates the words and is greater than they are."

Exultations (1909) was printed in the same year that saw the appearance of *Personæ*. Here Pound begins to be more the archaeologist than the artist. *Canzoni* (1911) and *Ripostes* (1912) both contain much that is sharp and living; they also contain the germs of decay. Pound began to scatter his talents; to start movements which he quickly discarded for new ones; to spend himself in poetic propaganda; to give more and more time to translation. A general collection of his poetry composed before Pound's forty-second year was

published under the former title, *Personæ*, in 1927. In this, as in the preceding volumes, Pound was establishing the importance of "speech as song," poetry which could talk as well as chant and declaim. Here can be seen his importance as an Imagist.

He began to publish his *magnum opus* in his fortieth year. The first of the *Cantos* (*Cantos I-XVI*) appeared in 1925. Pound planned to work on a huge scale, contrasting the ancient, the medieval, and the modern world in one hundred poems, each poem to be a "chapter" in an epical work. Up to 1938 fifty-one instalments had succeeded in rousing the enthusiasm of a few devotees, but merely baffling most readers with their jumble of archaic records and contemporary headlines, erudite references and current slang, verbal precision and cloudy jokes.

Besides his poetry, Pound wrote a great quantity of critical prose, the best of which can be found in *Make it New* (1935) and *The A B C of Reading* (1934). Too special to achieve permanence, too intellectual to become popular, Pound's contribution should not be underestimated. He was a pioneer in new forms; he formed and led the Imagists; he helped free modern poetry from excessive ornament and vague prettiness. In theory and in the best of his practice he caused poets to consider what was "hard and clean-cut."

A VIRGINAL

No, no! Go from me. I have left her lately.
I will not spoil my sheath with lesser brightness,
For my surrounding air has a new lightness;
Slight are her arms, yet they have bound me straitly
And left me cloaked as with a gauze of ether;
As with sweet leaves; as with a subtle clearness.
Oh, I have picked up magic in her nearness
To sheathe me half in half the things that sheathe her.

No, no! Go from me. I still have the flavor,
Soft as spring wind that's come from birchen bowers.
Green come the shoots, aye April in the branches,
As winter's wound with her sleight hand she stanches,
Hath of the trees a likeness of the savor:
As white their bark, so white this lady's hours.

BALLAD FOR GLOOM

For God, our God is a gallant foe
That playeth behind the veil.

I have loved my God as a child at heart
That seeketh deep bosoms for rest,
I have loved my God as a maid to man —
But lo, this thing is best:

To love your God as a gallant foe that plays behind the veil;
To meet your God as the night winds meet beyond Arcturus'
pale.

I have played with God for a woman,
I have staked with my God for truth,
I have lost to my God as a man, clear-eyed —
His dice be not of ruth.
For I am made as a naked blade,
But hear ye this thing in sooth:

Who loseth to God as man to man
Shall win at the turn of the game.
I have drawn my blade where the lightnings meet
But the ending is the same:
Who loseth to God as the sword blades lose
Shall win at the end of the game.

For God, our God is a gallant foe that playeth behind the
veil.
Whom God deigns not to overthrow hath need of triple mail.

IN A STATION OF THE METRO

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet, black bough.

A GIRL

The tree has entered my hands,
The sap has ascended my arms,
The tree has grown in my breast
Downward,
The branches grow out of me, like arms.
Tree you are,
Moss you are,
You are violets with wind above them.
A child — so high — you are;
And all this is folly to the world.

AN IMMORALITY

Sing we for love and idleness,
Naught else is worth the having.

Though I have been in many a land,
There is naught else in living.

And I would rather have my sweet,
Though rose-leaves die of grieving,

Than do high deeds in Hungary
To pass all men's believing.

GREEK EPIGRAM

Day and night are never weary,
Nor yet is God of creating
For day and night their torch-bearers
The aube and the crepuscule.

So, when I weary of praising the dawn and the sunset,
Let me be no more counted among the immortals;
But number me amid the wearying ones,
Let me be a man as the herd,
And as the slave that is given in barter.

Louis Untermeyer was born October 1, 1885, in New York City, where he lived, except for brief intervals, until 1923. His education was sketchy; his continued failure to comprehend geometry kept him from entering college. He intended to be a composer-pianist, but he kept music for his diversion instead of a profession. In 1923 he went abroad and, after two years in Europe, returned to devote himself entirely to literature. In 1928 he achieved a lifelong desire by acquiring a farm, a trout-stream, and half a mountain of sugar-maples in the Adirondacks, where he lives when he is not traveling and lecturing. He loves to talk and listens with difficulty.

It is difficult for the present compiler to consider this writer as severely as he deserves, the editor not having attained toward the poet that detachment which is the goal of criticism. However, it is evident that his work is divided into four kinds: his poetry, his parodies, his translations, and his prose. His initial volume of verse, *First Love* (1911), was a sequence of some seventy lyrics in which the influences of Heine and Housman were not only obvious but crippling; it is significant that when his *Selected Poems* appeared, just three of the seventy poems were included.

It was with *Challenge* (1914) that the author first declared himself with any sort of distinction. Although the ghost of Henley haunts many of these pages, poems like "Prayer," "On the Birth of a Child," and "Caliban in the Coal Mines" show "a fresh and lyrical sympathy with the modern world. . . . His vision" (thus *The Boston Transcript*) "is a social vision, his spirit a passionately energized command of the forces of justice."

Challenge was succeeded by *These Times* (1917), evidently an "interval" book which, lacking the concentration and unity of the better-known collection, sought for larger horizons. *The New Adam* (1920) is equally disintegrated, the poems alternating between separate successes and failures. *Roast Leviathan* (1923) is a more satisfactory unit; here the varied passions are fused in a new heat. *Burning Bush* (1928) is the quietest of his poetry, no longer dependent on loud adjectives or merely muscular epithets. *Food and Drink* (1932) is a further progress; many of the poems, such as "Long Feud" and "Last Words Before Winter," express serious, even solemn, emotions in a deceptively light tone of voice.

The best of the poems with most of the parodies were gathered in one volume, *Selected Poems and Parodies* (1935), and his early translations from Heine were revised and amplified to form the second volume of his analytical biography, *Heinrich Heine: Paradox and Poet* (1937). By the time he was fifty he had written, compiled, and edited more than thirty volumes, several of which had been

adopted as textbooks in high-schools and universities. The critical anthologies *This Singing World*, *Modern American Poetry*, *Modern British Poetry*, and *Yesterday and Today* were issued in various editions. When the *Encyclopædia Britannica* was revised he was chosen to furnish the article on Modern Poetry. His Henry Ward Beecher lectures at Amherst in 1937 were published as *Play in Poetry*.

The poet has also written several volumes of fiction, of which he considers his "novel" *Moses* the best, and several travel books, one of which (*The Donkey of God*) won an award in 1934 for the best book on Italian backgrounds in any language by a non-Italian. He has been associate editor of various magazines and has lectured in every state of the Union except South Dakota.

CALIBAN IN THE COAL MINES

God, we don't like to complain,
 We know that the mine is no lark.
 But — there's the pools from the rain;
 But — there's the cold and the dark.

God, You don't know what it is —
 You, in Your well-lighted sky —
 Watching the meteors whizz;
 Warm, with the sun always by.

God, if You had but the moon
 Stuck in Your cap for a lamp,
 Even You'd tire of it soon,
 Down in the dark and the damp.

Nothing but blackness above
 And nothing that moves but the cars . . .
 God, if You wish for our love,
 Fling us a handful of stars!

LONG FEUD

Where, without bloodshed, can there be
 A more relentless enmity
 Than the long feud fought silently

Between man and the growing grass.
Man's the aggressor, for he has
Weapons to humble and harass

The impudent spears that charge upon
His sacred privacy of lawn.
He mows them down, and they are gone

Only to lie in wait, although
He builds above and digs below
Where never a root would dare to go.

His are the triumphs till the day
There's no more grass to cut away
And, weary of labor, weary of play,

Having exhausted every whim,
He stretches out each conquering limb.
And then the small grass covers him.

ON THE BIRTH OF A CHILD

Lo — to the battle-ground of life,
Child, you have come, like a conquering shout,
Out of a struggle — into strife;
Out of a darkness — into doubt.

Girt with the fragile armor of youth,
Child, you must ride into endless wars,
With the sword of protest, the buckler of truth,
And a banner of love to sweep the stars.

About you the world's despair will surge;
Into defeat you must plunge and grope —
Be to the faltering, an urge;
Be to the hopeless years, a hope!

Be to the darkened world, a flame;
Be to its unconcern a blow!
For out of its pain and tumult you came,
And into its tumult and pain you go.

SONG AND FLAME

O God, to be a poet again.
To seize the trumpet and blow it again.
To point the quick spear and throw it again . . .

To take up the swinging
Sword that is flame,
And set the blood singing
That too long was tame;
To feather and aim
The first, burning arrow,
Till the Philistine marrow
Runs cold in its frame —

Never to weaken,
Never to whine;
To burn like a beacon
In every line;
To brandish a sign
That will waken the wearied,
While the sparks that were buried
Leap upward and shine —

The seed of that fire — to grow it again.
The flame of that banner — to show it again.
The lift of that trumpet — to know it again.
O God, to be a poet again!

LAST WORDS BEFORE WINTER

*All my sheep
Gather in a heap,
For I spy the woolly, woolly wolf.*

Farewell, my flocks,
Farewell. But let me find you
Safe in your stall and barn and box
With your winter's tale behind you.

Farewell, my cattle (both).
I leave you just as loath
As though you were a hundred head,
Instead
Of two-and-a-half.
(Two cows and a calf.)

Farewell, my apple-trees;
You have learned what it is to freeze,
With the drift on your knees.
But, oh, beware
Those first kind days, the snare
Of the too promising air,
The cost
Of over-sudden trust —
And then the killing frost.

Farewell, beloved acres;
I leave you in the hands
Of one whose earliest enterprise was lands:
Your Maker's.

Yard, hutch, and house, farewell.
It is for you to tell
How you withstood the great white wolf, whose fell
Is softer than a lambkin's, but whose breath
Is death.
Farewell, hoof, claw, and wing,
Finned, furred, and feathered thing,
Till Spring —

*All my sheep
Gather in a heap,
For I spy the woolly, woolly wolf.*

PRAYER

God, though this life is but a wraith,
Although we know not what we use,
Although we grope with little faith,
Give me the heart to fight — and lose.

Ever insurgent let me be,
Make me more daring than devout;
From sleek contentment keep me free,
And fill me with a buoyant doubt.

Open my eyes to visions girt
With beauty, and with wonder lit —
But let me always see the dirt,
And all that spawn and die in it.

Open my ears to music; let
Me thrill with Spring's first flutes and drums —
But never let me dare forget
The bitter ballads of the slums.

From compromise and things half-done,
Keep me, with stern and stubborn pride;
And when, at last, the fight is won,
God, keep me still unsatisfied.

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

William Rose Benét was born at Fort Hamilton, New York Harbor, February 2, 1886. He was educated at Albany Academy and graduated from Yale in 1907. After various experiences as free-lance writer, publisher's reader, and second lieutenant, Benét became the associate editor of the *New York Post's* "Literary Review" in 1920, resigning in 1923 to become one of the editors of *The Saturday Review of Literature*.

The outstanding feature of Benét's verse is its whimsicality; an oriental imagination riots through his pages. Like the title-poem of his first volume, *Merchants from Cathay* (1913), all of Benét's volumes

vibrate with an infectious music; they are full of the sonorous stuff that one rolls out tramping a road alone.

But Benét's charm is not confined to the lift and swing of rollicking choruses. His *The Falconer of God* (1914), *The Great White Wall* (1916), and *The Burglar of the Zodiac* (1918) contain decorations as bold as they are brilliant; they ring with a strange and spicy music evoked from seemingly casual words.

Moons of Grandeur (1920) represents the fullest development of Benét's unusual gifts, a combination of Eastern phantasy and Western vigor. The best of Benét's previous volumes as well as a group of new poems were selected for *Man Possessed* (1927), a volume that reveals a colorful vigor and an extraordinary range of interest. A more critical selection of Benét's poems may be found in his *Golden Fleece* (1935) which also contains several new pieces. "Sagacity" is a tribute written after the death of his second wife, the poet Elinor Wylie.

MERCHANTS FROM CATHAY

*How that
They came.*

Their heels slapped their bumping mules;
their fat chaps glowed.

Glory unto Mary, each seemed to wear a
crown!

Like sunset their robes were on the wide, white
road:

So we saw those mad merchants come dust-
ing into town!

*Of their
Beasts,*

Two paunchy beasts they rode on and two they
drove before.

May the Saints all help us, the tiger-stripes
they had!

And the panniers upon them swelled full of
stuffs and ore!

The square buzzed and jostled at a sight so
mad.

*And their
Beast,*

They bawled in their beards, and their turbans
they wried.

They stopped by the stalls with curvetting
and clatter.

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

As bronze as the bracken their necks and faces
dyed —

And a stave they sat singing, to tell us of
the matter.

*With its
Burthen*

*For your silks to Sugarmago! For your dyes
to Isfahan!*

Weird fruits from the Isle o' Lamaree.

*But for magic merchandise, for treasure-
trove and spice,*

*"Here's a catch and a carol to the great, grand
Chan,*

The King of all the Kings across the sea!

*And
Chorus.*

*"Here's a catch and a carol to the great, grand
Chan;*

*For we won through the deserts to his sunset
barbican;*

*And the mountains of his palace no Titan's
reach may span*

Where he wields his seignorie!

*A first
Stave
Fearsome,*

*"Red-as-blood skins of Panthers, so bright
against the sun*

*On the walls of the halls where his pillared
state is set*

*They daze with the blaze no man may look
upon.*

*And with conduits of beverage those floors
run wet.*

*And a second
Right hard
To stomach*

*"His wives stiff with riches, they sit before
him there.*

*Bird and beast at his feast make song and
clapping cheer.*

*And jugglers and enchanters, all walking on
the air,*

*Make fall eclipse and thunder — make
moons and suns appear!*

*And a third,
Which is a
Laughable
Thing.*

"Once the Chan, by his enemies sore-prest,
and sorely spent,

Lay, so they say, in a thicket 'neath a tree
Where the howl of an owl vexed his foes from
their intent:

Then that fowl for a holy bird of reverence
made he!

*We gape to
Hear them end,*

"*A catch and a carol to the great, grand
Chan!*

*Pastmasters of disasters, our desert caravan
Won through all peril to his sunset barbican,
Where he wields his seignorie!*¹

*And crowns he gave us! We end where we
began:*

*A catch and a carol to the great, grand Chan,
The King of all the Kings across the sea!"*

*And are in
Terror,*

Those mad, antic Merchants! . . . Their
stripèd beasts did beat

The market-square suddenly with hooves of
beaten gold!

The ground yawned gaping and flamed be-
neath our feet!

They plunged to Pits Abysmal with their
wealth untold!

*And dread
it is
Devil's Work.*

And some say the Chan himself in anger dealt
the stroke —

For sharing of his secrets with silly, common
folk:

But Holy, Blessed Mary, preserve us as you
may

Lest once more those mad Merchants come
chanting from Cathay!

¹ *seignorie*: lordship, power and authority.

SAGACITY

We knew so much; when her beautiful eyes could lighten,
Her beautiful laughter follow our phrase;
Or the gaze go hard with pain, the lips tighten,
On the bitterer days.
Oh, ours was all knowing then, all generous displaying.
Such wisdom we had to show!
And now there is merely silence, silence, silence saying
All we did not know.

JESSE JAMES

(A Design in Red and Yellow for a Nickel Library)

Jesse James was a two-gun man,
 (Roll on, Missouri!)
Strong-arm chief of an outlaw clan.
 (From Kansas to Illinois!)
He twirled an old Colt forty-five;
 (Roll on, Missouri!)
They never took Jesse James alive.
 (Roll, Missouri, roll!)

Jesse James was King of the Wes';
 (Cataracts in the Missouri!)
He'd a di'mon' heart in his lef' breas';
 (Brown Missouri rolls!)
He'd a fire in his heart no hurt could stifle;
 (Thunder, Missouri!)
Lion eyes an' a Winchester rifle.
 (Missouri, roll down!)

Jesse James rode a pinto hawse;
Come at night to a water-cawse;
Tetched with the rowel that pinto's flank;
She sprung the torrent from bank to bank.

Jesse rode through a sleepin' town;
Looked the moonlit street both up an' down;

Crack-crack-crack, the street ran flames
An' a great voice cried, "I'm Jesse James!"

Hawse an' afoot they're after Jess!

(Roll on, Missouri!)

Spurrin' an' spurrin' — but he's gone Wes'.

(Brown Missouri rolls!)

He was ten foot tall when he stood in his boots;

(Lightnin' like the Missouri!)

More'n a match fer sich galoots.

(Roll, Missouri, roll!)

Jesse James rode outa the sage;

Roun' the rocks come the swayin' stage;

Straddlin' the road a giant stan's

An' a great voice bellers, "Throw up yer han's!"

Jesse raked in the di'mon' rings,

The big gold watches an' the yuther things;

Jesse divvied 'em then an' thar

With a cryin' child had lost her mar.

They're creepin'; they're crawlin', they're stalkin' Jess;

(Roll on, Missouri!)

They's a rumor he's gone much further Wes';

(Roll, Missouri, roll!)

They's word of a cayuse hitched to the bars

(Ruddy clouds on Missouri!)

Of a golden sunset that busts into stars.

(Missouri, roll down!)

Jesse James rode hell fer leather;

He was a hawse an' a man together;

In a cave in a mountain high up in air

He lived with a rattlesnake, a wolf, an' a bear.

Jesse's heart was as sof' as a woman;

Fer guts an' stren'th he was sooper-human;

He could put six shots through a woodpecker's eye

And take in one swaller a gallon o' rye.

They sought him here an' they sought him there,
 (Roll on, Missouri!)
But he strides by night through the ways of the air;
 (Brown Missouri rolls!)
They say he was took an' they say he is dead,
 (Thunder, Missouri!)
But he ain't — he's a sunset overhead!
 (Missouri down to the sea!)

Jesse James was a Hercules.
When he went through the woods he tore up the trees.
When he went on the plains he smoked the groun'
An' the hull lan' shuddered fer miles aroun'.

Jesse James wore a red bandanner
That waved on the breeze like the Star Spangled Banner;
In seven states he cut up dadoes.
He's gone with the bufler an' the desperadoes.

Yes, Jesse James was a two-gun man
 (Roll on, Missouri!)
The same as when this song began;
 (From Kansas to Illinois!)
An' when you see a sunset bust into flames
 (Lightnin' like the Missouri!)
Or a thunderstorm blaze — that's Jesse James!
 (Hear that Missouri roll!)

NIGHT

Let the night keep
What the night takes,
Sighs buried deep,
Ancient heart-aches,
Groans of the lover,
Tears of the lost;
Let day discover not
All the night cost!

Let the night keep
Love's burning bliss,
Drowned in deep sleep
Whisper and kiss,
Thoughts like white flowers
In hedges of May;
Let such deep hours not
Fade with the day!

Monarch is night
Of all eldest things,
Pain and affright,
Rapturous wings;
Night the crown, night the sword
Lifted to smite.
Kneel to your overlord,
Children of night!

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

John Gould Fletcher was born at Little Rock, Arkansas, January 3, 1886. He was educated at Phillips Academy and Harvard and, after some years in Massachusetts, moved to England, where he lived for twenty years. In 1933 he returned to the family home in Little Rock.

In 1913 Fletcher published five books of poems which he has referred to as "his literary wild oats," five small collections of faintly interesting verse. A year later Fletcher joined the Imagists. With H. D. and Amy Lowell he became one of the leaders of this interesting movement and his contributions were among the outstanding features of the anthologies. With the appearance of *Some Imagist Poets*, Fletcher discarded his previous style and emerged as a more arresting poet with *Irradiations — Sand and Spray* (1915). This volume is full of an extraordinary fancy; imagination riots through it, though it is sometimes a bloodless and bodiless imagination.

In the following *Goblins and Pagodas* (1916), Fletcher carries his unrelated harmonies much further. Color dominates him; the set of eleven "color symphonies" is an elaborate design in which the tone as well as the thought is summoned by color-associations, sometimes closely related, sometimes far-fetched.

In 1917 Fletcher again began to change in spirit as well as style. He sought for depths rather than surfaces; his "Lincoln" accomplished a closer relation to humanity. A moving mysticism speaks from *The Tree of Life* (1918); the more obviously native *Granite and Breakers* (1921) and *Parables* (1925) contain a prophetic note new to this poet. The later poems reach depths which the preceding verses never attained. A subdued gravity moves through *The Black Rock* (1928), *Branches of Adam* (1926), and *XXIV Elegies* (1935).

Fletcher has translated several volumes from the French; his autobiography up to fifty was published in 1937 under the title *Life Is My Song*. *Selected Poems* appeared in 1938.

FROM "IRRADIATIONS"

I

Over the roof-tops race the shadows of clouds;
Like horses the shadows of clouds charge down the street.

Whirlpools of purple and gold,
Winds from the mountains of cinnabar,
Lacquered mandarin moments, palanquins swaying and bal-
ancing

Amid vermilion pavilions, against the jade balustrades,
Glint of the glittering wings of dragon-flies in the light:
Silver filaments, golden flakes settling downwards,
Rippling, quivering flutters, repulse and surrender,
The sun broidered upon the rain,
The rain rustling with the sun.

Over the roof-tops race the shadows of clouds;
Like horses the shadows of clouds charge down the street. . .

III

The trees, like great jade elephants,
Chained, stamp and shake 'neath the gadflies of the breeze;
The trees lunge and plunge, unruly elephants:
The clouds are their crimson howdah-canopies;
The sunlight glints like the golden robe of a Shah.
Would I were tossed on the wrinkled backs of those trees.

IV

O seeded grass, you army of little men
Crawling up the long slope with quivering, quick blades of
steel:
You who storm millions of graves, tiny green tentacles of
Earth,
Interlace yourselves tightly over my heart,
And do not let me go:
For I would lie here forever and watch with one eye
The pilgrimaging ants in your dull, savage jungles,
The while with the other I see the stiff lines of the slope
Break in mid-air, a wave surprisingly arrested, —
And above them, wavering, dancing, bodiless, colorless, un-
real,
The long thin lazy fingers of the heat.

LONDON NIGHTFALL

I saw the shapes that stood upon the clouds:
And they were tiger-breasted, shot with light,
And all of them, lifting long trumpets together,
Blew over the city, for the night to come.
Down in the street, we floundered in the mud;
Above, in endless files, gold angels came
And stood upon the clouds, and blew their horns
For night.

Like a wet petal crumpled,
Twilight fell soddenly on the weary city;
The 'busses lurched and groaned,
The shops put up their doors.

But skywards, far aloft,
The angels, vanishing, waved broad plumes of gold,
Summoning spirits from a thousand hills
To pour the thick night out upon the earth.

LINCOLN

I

Like a gaunt, scraggly pine
Which lifts its head above the mournful sandhills;
And patiently, through dull years of bitter silence,
Untended and uncared for, begins to grow.

Ungainly, laboring, huge,
The wind of the north has twisted and gnarled its branches;
Yet in the heat of midsummer days, when thunder-clouds ring
the horizon,
A nation of men shall rest beneath its shade.

And it shall protect them all,
Hold everyone safe there, watching aloof in silence;
Until at last one mad stray bolt from the zenith
Shall strike it in an instant down to earth.

II

There was a darkness in this man; an immense and hollow
darkness,
Of which we may not speak, nor share with him, nor enter;
A darkness through which strong roots stretched downwards
into the earth
Towards old things;
Towards the herdman-kings who walked the earth and spoke
with God,
Towards the wanderers who sought for they knew not what,
and found their goal at last;
Towards the men who waited, only waited patiently when all
seemed lost,
Many bitter winters of defeat;
Down to the granite of patience
These roots swept, knotted fibrous roots, prying, piercing,
seeking,
And drew from the living rock and the living waters about it
The red sap to carry upwards to the sun.

Not proud, but humble,
Only to serve and pass on, to endure to the end through
service;
For the ax is laid at the root of the trees, and all that bring
not forth good fruit
Shall be cut down on the day to come and cast into the fire.

III

There is silence abroad in the land today,
And in the hearts of men, a deep and anxious silence;
And, because we are still at last, those bronze lips slowly
open,
Those hollow and weary eyes take on a gleam of light.
Slowly a patient, firm-syllabled voice cuts through the end-
less silence
Like laboring oxen that drag a plow through the chaos of
rude clay-fields:
"I went forward as the light goes forward in early spring,
But there were also many things which I left behind.
"Tombs that were quiet;
One, of a mother, whose brief light went out in the darkness,
One, of a loved one, the snow on whose grave is long falling,
One, only of a child, but it was mine.
"Have you forgot your graves? Go, question them in an-
guish,
Listen long to their unstirred lips. From your hostages to
silence,
Learn there is no life without death, no dawn without sun-
setting,
No victory but to Him who has given all."

IV

The clamor of cannon dies down, the furnace-mouth of the
battle is silent.
The midwinter sun dips and descends, the earth takes on
afresh its bright colors.

But he whom we mocked and obeyed not, he whom we
scorned and mistrusted,
He has descended, like a god, to his rest.

Over the uproar of cities,
Over the million intricate threads of life wavering and cross-
ing,
In the midst of problems we know not, tangling, perplexing,
ensnaring,
Rises one white tomb alone.

Beam over it, stars.
Wrap it round, stripes — stripes red for the pain that he bore
for you —
Enfold it forever, O flag, rent, soiled, but repaired through
your anguish;
Long as you keep him there safe, the nations shall bow to
your law.

Strew over him flowers;
Blue forget-me-nots from the north, and the bright pink
arbutus
From the east, and from the west rich orange blossoms,
But from the heart of the land take the passion-flower.

Rayed, violet, dim,
With the nails that pierced, the cross that he bore and the
circlet,
And beside it there, lay also one lonely snow-white mag-
nolia,
Bitter for remembrance of the healing which has passed.

THE SKATERS

Black swallows swooping or gliding
In a flurry of entangled loops and curves;
The skaters skim over the frozen river.
And the grinding click of their skates as they impinge upon
the surface,
Is like the brushing together of thin wing-tips of silver.

Hilda Doolittle was born September 10, 1886, at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. When she was still a child, her father became Director of the Flower Observatory and the family moved to a suburb in the outskirts of Philadelphia. She attended a private school in West Philadelphia, entered Bryn Mawr College in 1904, and went abroad, for what was intended to be a short sojourn, in 1911. After a visit to Italy and France, she came to London, joined Ezra Pound, and helped organize the Imagists. Her work (signed H. D.) began to appear in a few magazines and its unusual quality was recognized at once. Her first volume, *Sea Garden*, appeared in 1916; her second, *Hymen*, an amplification of her gift, was published in 1921.

H. D. is, by all odds, the most important of her group. She is the only one who has steadfastly held to the letter as well as to the spirit of its *credo*. She is, in fact, the only true Imagist. Her poems, capturing the firm delicacy of the Greek models, are like a set of Tanagra figurines. Here, at first glance, the effect is chilling; beauty seems held in a frozen gesture. But it is in this very fixation of light, color, and emotion that she achieves intensity.

Observe the tiny poem entitled "Heat." Here, in the fewest possible words, is something beyond the description of heat — here is the effect of it. In these lines one feels the very weight and solidity of a midsummer afternoon. The tiny "Oread" paints an agitated sea in miniature.

Heliodora (1924) and the new poems in *Collected Poems* (1925) are full of passion, but passion severely controlled. The same combination of ecstasy and austerity is evident in her later *Red Roses for Bronze* (1932) and in her Greek dramas *Hippolytus Temporizes* (1925) and *Ion* (1937). These works, with their addition of rhyme and regular rhythm, fuse the skill of the early Imagist with the strength of the mature poet.

OREAD

Whirl up, sea —
Whirl your pointed pines.
Splash your great pines
On our rocks.
Hurl your green over us —
Cover us with your pools of fir.

HEAT

O wind, rend open the heat,
cut apart the heat,
rend it to tatters.

Fruit cannot drop
through this thick air —
fruit cannot fall into heat
that presses up and blunts
the points of pears
and rounds the grapes.

Cut through the heat —
plow through it,
turning it on either side
of your path.

PEAR TREE

Silver dust
lifted from the earth,
higher than my arms reach,
you have mounted.
O silver,
higher than my arms reach
you front us with great mass;
no flower ever opened
so stanch a white leaf,
no flower ever parted silver
from such rare silver;
O white pear,
your flower-tufts,
thick on the branch,
bring summer and ripe fruits
in their purple hearts.

SONG FROM CYPRUS

Where is the nightingale,
in what myrrh-wood and dim?
ah, let the night come black,
for we would conjure back
all that enchanted him,
all that enchanted him.

Where is the bird of fire?
in what packed hedge of rose?
in what roofed ledge of flower?
no other creature knows
what magic lurks within,
what magic lurks within.

Bird, bird, bird, bird, we cry,
hear, pity us in pain;
hearts break in the sunlight,
hearts break in daylight rain,
only night heals again,
only night heals again.

LETHE

Nor skin nor hide nor fleece
Shall cover you,
Nor curtain of crimson nor fine
Shelter of cedar-wood be over you,
Nor the fir-tree
Nor the pine.

Nor sight of whin nor gorse
Nor river-yew,
Nor fragrance of flowering bush,
Nor wailing of reed-bird to waken you.
Nor of linnet
Nor of thrush.

Nor word nor touch nor sight
 Of lover, you
 Shall long through the night but for this:
 The roll of the full tide to cover you
 Without question,
 Without kiss.

JEAN STARR UNTERMAYER

Jean Starr was born at Zanesville, Ohio, May 13, 1886, and educated at the Putnam Seminary in the city of her birth. At sixteen, she came to New York City, pursuing special studies at Columbia. She was married to Louis Untermeyer in 1907, divorced in 1933.

While not an Imagist, her early work was influenced by that movement with its emphasis on the exact word and the precise image. Precision was almost a passion with her; her first volume, *Growing Pains* (1918), is unusually severe in its definiteness. Self-critical and self-searching, there is, at the same time, a sharp color-sense, a surprising whimsicality, and a translation of ordinary phenomena in terms of the unusually pictorial. The brief "High Tide" and "Clay Hills" establish this; "Autumn," praised by Amy Lowell for its sensitive "painting in words," confirms it.

Dreams Out of Darkness (1921) and *Steep Ascent* (1927) reveal an intensification and ripening of this author's powers with a richer musical undercurrent. This increase of melody is most obvious in the persuasive music and symbolism of "Lake Song."

Winged Child (1936) shows a new humor with a greater variety of forms. In her later work, Mrs. Untermeyer, in common with H. D., Fletcher, Kreymborg, and others, employs more regular rhythms and even rhyme.

CLAY HILLS

It is easy to mold the yielding clay.
 And many shapes grow into beauty
 Under the facile hand.
 But forms of clay are lightly broken:
 They will lie shattered and forgotten in a dingy corner.
 But underneath the slipping clay
 Is rock . . .
 I would rather work in stubborn rock

All the years of my life,
And make one strong thing,
And set it in a high clean place,
To recall the granite strength of my desire.

HIGH TIDE

I edged back against the night.
The sea growled assault on the wave-bitten shore.
And the breakers,
Like young and impatient hounds,
Sprang with rough joy on the shrinking sand.
Sprang, but were pulled back slowly,
With a long, relentless pull,
Whimpering, into the dark.

Then I saw who held them captive;
And I saw how they were bound
With a broad and quivering leash of light,
Held by the moon,
As, calm and unsmiling,
She walked the deep fields of the sky.

AUTUMN

(To My Mother)

How memory cuts away the years,
And how clean the picture comes
Of autumn days, brisk and busy;
Charged with keen sunshine.
And you, stirred with activity,
The spirit of those energetic days.

There was our back-yard,
So plain and stripped of green,
With even the weeds carefully pulled away
From the crooked red bricks that made the walk,
And the earth on either side so black.

Autumn and dead leaves burning in the sharp air.
And winter comforts coming in like a pageant.
I shall not forget them: .
Great jars laden with the raw green of pickles,
Standing in a solemn row across the back of the porch,
Exhaling the pungent dill;
And, in the very center of the yard,
You, tending the great catsup kettle of gleaming copper,
Where fat, red tomatoes bobbed up and down
Like jolly monks in a drunken dance.
And there were bland banks of cabbages that came by the
wagon-load,
Soon to be cut into delicate ribbons
Only to be crushed by the heavy, wooden stompers.
Such feathery whiteness — to come to kraut!
And after, there were grapes that hid their brightness under
a gray dust,
Then gushed thrilling, purple blood over the fire;
And enameled crab-apples that tricked with their fragrance
But were bitter to taste.
And there were spicy plums and ill-shaped quinces,
And long string beans floating in pans of clear water
Like slim, green fishes.
And there was fish itself,
Salted, silver herring from the city. . . .
And you moved among these mysteries,
Absorbed and smiling and sure;
Stirring, tasting, measuring,
With the precision of a ritual.
I like to think of you in your years of power —
You, now so shaken and so powerless —
High priestess of your home.

LAKE SONG

The lapping of lake water
Is like the weeping of women,
The weeping of ancient women
Who grieved without rebellion.

The lake falls over the shore
Like tears on their curven bosoms.
Here is languid, luxurious wailing;
The wailing of kings' daughters.

So do we ever cry,
A soft, unmutinous crying,
When we know ourselves each a princess
Locked fast within her tower.

The lapping of lake water
Is like the weeping of women,
The fertile tears of women
That water the dreams of men.

JOYCE KILMER

(Alfred) Joyce Kilmer was born at New Brunswick, New Jersey, December 6, 1886. He was graduated from Rutgers College in 1904 and received his A.B. from Columbia in 1906. In 1917 Kilmer joined the Officers' Reserve Training Corps, but he soon resigned from this. In less than three weeks after America entered the World War, he enlisted as a private in the Seventh Regiment, National Guard, New York. On July 28, 1918, the five-day battle for the mastery of the heights beyond the river Ourcq was begun. Two days later, Kilmer was killed in action.

Death came before the poet had matured or even developed his gifts. His first volume, *Summer of Love* (1911), is wholly imitative; it is full of reflections of a dozen other sources, "a broken bundle of mirrors." *Trees and Other Poems* (1914) contains the title-poem by which Kilmer is best known and, though various influences are here, a refreshing candor lights up the lines. In *Main Street and Other Poems* (1917) the simplicity is less self-conscious and the effect is more spontaneous.

TREES

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the sweet earth's flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

MARTIN

When I am tired of earnest men,
Intense and keen and sharp and clever,
Pursuing fame with brush or pen
Or counting metal disks forever,
Then from the halls of shadowland
Beyond the trackless purple sea
Old Martin's ghost comes back to stand
Beside my desk and talk to me.

Still on his delicate pale face
A quizzical thin smile is showing,
His cheeks are wrinkled like fine lace,
His kind blue eyes are gay and glowing.
He wears a brilliant-hued cravat,
A suit to match his soft gray hair,
A rakish stick, a knowing hat,
A manner blithe and debonair.

How good, that he who always knew
That being lovely was a duty,
Should have gold halls to wander through
And should himself inhabit beauty.

How like his old unselfish way
To leave those halls of splendid mirth
And comfort those condemned to stay
Upon the bleak and somber earth.

Some people ask: What cruel chance
Made Martin's life so sad a story?
Martin? Why, he exhaled romance
And wore an overcoat of glory.
A fleck of sunlight in the street,
A horse, a book, a girl who smiled, —
Such visions made each moment sweet
For this receptive, ancient child.

Because it was old Martin's lot
To be, not make, a decoration,
Shall we then scorn him, having not
His genius of appreciation?
Rich joy and love he got and gave;
His heart was merry as his dress.
Pile laurel wreaths upon his grave
Who did not gain, but was, success.

ROBINSON JEFFERS¹

Robinson Jeffers' condensed autobiography runs as follows: "Born in Pittsburgh in 1887; my parents carried me about Europe a good deal. When I was fifteen I was brought home. Next year my family moved to California and I graduated at eighteen from Occidental College, Los Angeles. After that, desultory years at the University of Southern California, University of Zurich, Medical School in Los Angeles, University of Washington, but with faint interest. I wasn't deeply interested in anything but poetry. I married Una Call Kuster in 1913. We were going to England in the autumn of 1914. But the August news turned us to this village of Carmel instead; and when the stagecoach topped the hill from Monterey, and we looked down through pines and sea-fogs on Carmel Bay, it was evident that we had come without knowing it to our inevitable place."

Flacons and Apples (1912), Jeffers' undistinguished first volume,

was followed by *Californians* (1916), a scarcely more distinctive book. In 1925 *Tamar and Other Poems* was brought out by a small printer and caused an overnight sensation. It was reprinted the following year, with the addition of new poems, as *Roan Stallion, Tamar, and Other Poems* (1926). This, it was evident at once, was masculine poetry, stark, even terrible in its intensities. Whatever defects this verse has — and it must be confessed that Jeffers piles on his catastrophes with little humor and less restraint — there is no denying its power. He combines two almost contrary types of strength: the rude American and the stoic Greek.

The Women of Sur Point (1927) again shows how easily Jeffers can swing the long line, how suddenly his phrases soar from the tawdry into the ecstatic, how boldly he can lift language.

From *Cawdor* (1928) through *Dear Judas* (1929), *Thurso's Landing* (1932), and *Solstice* (1935) to *Such Counsels You Gave to Me* (1937) Jeffers deals with themes which are horrifying against settings which are monstrous. Although the shorter poems are quieter and less pessimistic, the key is generally terror with an overtone of madness. But if the philosophy is negative, the poetry is vigorous. It is not a pretty poetry, not a poetry we may love, but it is a poetry which is hard to forget. It may move to the extremes of horror or anger, but it never fails to move the reader.

Several biographies and theses have been written about the poet; two of the best are George Sterling's *Robinson Jeffers* (1926) and Lawrence Powell's *Robinson Jeffers: The Man and His Work* (1934).

COMPENSATION

Solitude that unmakes me one of men
In snowwhite hands brings singular recompense,
Evening me with kindlier natures when
On the needled pinewood the cold dew condense
About the hour of Rigel fallen from heaven
In wintertime, or when the long night tides
Sigh blindly from the sand dune backward driven,
Or when on stormwings of the northwind rides
The foamscud with the cormorants, or when passes
A horse or dog with brown affectionate eyes,
Or autumn frosts are pricked by earliest grasses,
Or whirring from her cover a quail flies.
Why, even in humanity beauty and good
Show, from the mountainside of solitude.

AGE IN PROSPECT

Praise youth's hot blood if you will, I think that happiness
Rather consists in having lived clear through
Youth and hot blood, on to the wintrier hemisphere
Where one has time to wait and remember.

Youth and hot blood are beautiful, so is peacefulness.
Youth had some islands in it but age is indeed
An island and a peak; age has infirmities,
Not few, but youth is all one fever.

And there is no possession more sure than memory's;
But if I reach that gray island, that peak,
My hope is still to possess with eyes the homeliness
Of ancient loves, ocean and mountains,

And meditate the sea-mouth of mortality
And the fountain six feet down with a quieter thirst
Than now I feel for old age; a creature progressively
Thirsty for life will be for death too.

JOY

Though joy is better than sorrow, joy is not great;
Peace is great, strength is great.
Not for joy the stars burn, not for joy the vulture
Spreads her gray sails on the air
Over the mountain; not for joy the worn mountain
Stands, while years like water
Trench his long sides. "I am neither mountain nor bird
Nor star; and I seek joy."
The weakness of your breed; yet at length quietness
Will cover those wistful eyes.

HURT HAWKS

The broken pillar of the wing jags from the clotted shoulder;
The wing trails like a banner in defeat,

No more to use the sky forever but live with famine
And pain a few days: cat nor coyote
Will shorten the week of waiting for death, there is game
without talons.

He stands under the oak-bush and waits
The lame feet of salvation; at night he remembers freedom
And flies in a dream, the dawns ruin it.
He is strong and pain is worse to the strong, incapacity is
worse.

The curs of the day come and torment him
At distance, no one but death the redeemer will humble that
head,

The intrepid readiness, the terrible eyes.
The wild God of the world is sometimes merciful to those
That ask mercy, not often to the arrogant.
You do not know him, you communal people, or you have
forgotten him;

Intemperate and savage, the hawk remembers him;
Beautiful and wild, the hawks, and men that are dying re-
member him . . .

I'd sooner, except the penalties, kill a man than a hawk; but
the great redtail

Had nothing left but unable misery
From the bone too shattered for mending, the wing that
trailed under his talons when he moved.

We had fed him six weeks, I gave him freedom,
He wandered over the foreland hill and returned in the eve-
ning, asking for death,

Not like a beggar, still eyed with the old
Implacable arrogance. I gave him the lead gift in the twi-
light.

What fell was relaxed,
Owl-downy, soft feminine feathers; but what
Soared: the fierce rush: the night-herons by the flooded river
cried fear at its rising
Before it was quite unsheathed from reality.

GALE IN APRIL

Intense and terrible beauty, how has our race with the frail
naked nerves,
So little a craft, swum down from its far launching?
Why now, only because the northwest blows and the headed
grass billows,
Great seas jagging the west and on the granite
Blanching, the vessel is brimmed, this dancing play of the
world is too much passion.
A gale in April so overfilling the spirit,
Though his ribs were thick as the earth's, arches of moun-
tain, how shall one dare to live,
Though his blood were like the earth's rivers and his flesh
iron,
How shall one dare to live? One is born strong, how do the
weak endure it?
The strong lean upon death as on a rock,
After eighty years there is shelter and the naked nerves shall
be covered with deep quietness.
O beauty of things, go on, go on, O torture
Of intense joy, I have lasted out my time, I have thanked
God and finished,
Roots of millennial trees fold me in the darkness,
Northwest winds shake their tops, not to the root, not to the
root, I have passed
From beauty to the other beauty, peace, the night splendor.

TO THE STONE-CUTTERS

Stone-cutters fighting time with marble, you foredefeated
Challengers of oblivion,
Eat cynical earnings, knowing rock splits, records fall down,
The square-limbed Roman letters
Scale in the thaws, wear in the rain. The poet as well
Builds his monument mockingly;
For man will be blotted out, the blithe earth die, the brave
sun

Die blind, his heart blackening:
Yet stones have stood for a thousand years, and pained
thoughts found
The honey peace in old poems.

ROY HELTON

Roy Helton was born in Washington, D. C., in 1887. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1908. He studied art — and found he was color-blind. He spent two years at inventions — and found he had no business sense. After a few more experiments he became a schoolmaster in West Philadelphia.

Helton's first volume, *Youth's Pilgrimage* (1915), is a strange, mystical affair, full of vague symbolism. *Outcasts in Beulah Land* (1918) is entirely different in theme and treatment. This is a much starker verse; a poetry of city streets, direct and sharp. Shortly after, Helton spent much of his time in the Appalachian Mountains and became intimately connected with primitive backgrounds. The result was *Lonesome Water* (1930), full of the sense of the Kentucky hills.

"Old Christmas Morning" is one of the poems in the latter collection which is rare in modern verse. It is told as vividly as an old ballad, a ghost story which takes place on the night twelve days after December 25th, on "Old Christmas," which tradition has connected with supernatural events. The story of the feud is heightened not only by the crisp dialogue but by the skillful dramatic suspense and the final surprise.

OLD CHRISTMAS MORNING

"Where you coming from, Lomey Carter,
So airy over the snow?
And what's them pretties you got in your hand,
And where you aiming to go?

"Step in, Honey: Old Christmas morning
I ain't got nothing much;
Maybe a bite of sweetness and corn bread,
A little ham meat and such.

"But come in, Honey! Sally Anne Barton's
Hungering after your face.
Wait till I light my candle up:
Set down! There's your old place.

"Now where you been so airy this morning? "

"Graveyard, Sally Anne.

*Up by the trace in the salt lick meadows
Where Taulbe kilt my man."*

"Taulbe ain't to home this morning . . .

I can't scratch up a light:

Dampness gets on the heads of the matches;
But I'll blow up the embers bright."

"Needn't trouble. I won't be stopping:

Going a long ways still."

"You didn't see nothing, Lomey Carter,
Up on the graveyard hill? "

"What should I see there, Sally Anne Barton? "

"Well, sperits do walk last night."

"There were an elder bush a-blooming
While the moon still give some light."

"Yes, elder bushes, they bloom, Old Christmas,
And critters kneel down in their straw.

Anything else up in the graveyard? "

"One thing more I saw:

"I saw my man with his head all bleeding

Where Taulbe's shot went through."

"What did he say? " "He stooped and kissed me."

"What did he say to you? "

"Said, Lord Jesus forguv your Taulbe;

But he told me another word;

He said it soft when he stooped and kissed me.

That were the last I heard."

"Taulbe ain't to home this morning."

*"I know that, Sally Anne,
For I kilt him, coming down through the meadow
Where Taulbe kilt my man."*

*"I met him upon the meadow trace
When the moon were fainting fast,
And I had my dead man's rifle gun
And kilt him as he come past."*

"But I heard two shots." " 'Twas his was second:
*He shot me 'fore he died:
You'll find us at daybreak, Sally Anne Barton:
I'm laying there dead at his side."*

ALAN SEEGER

Alan Seeger was born in New York, June 22, 1888. When he was still a baby, his parents moved to Staten Island, where he remained through boyhood. Later, there were several other migrations, including a sojourn in Mexico, where Seeger spent the most impressionable years of his youth. In 1906, he entered Harvard.

1914 came, and the European war had not entered its third week when, along with some forty of his fellow-countrymen, Seeger enlisted in the Foreign Legion of France. He was in action almost continually, serving on various fronts. On the fourth of July, 1916, ordered to take the village of Belloy-en-Santerre, Seeger advanced in the first rush with his squad, which was practically wiped out by hidden machine-gun fire. Seeger fell, mortally wounded, and died the next morning.

Seeger's literary promise was far greater than his poetic accomplishment. With the exception of his famous (and prophetic) poem, there is little of importance, though much of charm, in his collected *Poems* published, with an Introduction by William Archer, in 1916.

I HAVE A RENDEZVOUS WITH DEATH

I have a rendezvous with Death
At some disputed barricade,
When Spring comes back with rustling shade
And apple-blossoms fill the air —

I have a rendezvous with Death
When Spring brings back blue days and fair.
It may be he shall take my hand
And lead me into his dark land
And close my eyes and quench my breath —
It may be I shall pass him still.
I have a rendezvous with Death
On some scarred slope of battered hill,
When Spring comes round again this year
And the first meadow-flowers appear.

God knows 'twere better to be deep
Pillowed in silk and scented down,
Where love throbs out in blissful sleep,
Pulse nigh to pulse, and breath to breath,
Where hushed awakenings are dear . . .
But I've a rendezvous with Death
At midnight in some flaming town;
When Spring trips north again this year,
And I to my pledged word am true,
I shall not fail that rendezvous.

T. S. ELIOT

T(homas) S(tearns) Eliot was born in St. Louis, Missouri, September 26, 1888. He was educated at Harvard, at the Sorbonne, and at Oxford. Since 1914 he has lived in England, where he is a member of the publishing firm of Faber & Faber.

His *Collected Poems* (1936) contained comparatively few poems besides the long and difficult *The Waste Land* (1922), but these few poems exercised a great influence upon Eliot's generation. The mood was a mixture of irony and despair; it expressed a world of insecurity and bewilderment. Eliot mirrored an age shell-shocked by war and assaulted by economic uncertainty, an age in which faiths had been shattered and foundations had crumbled. Eliot spoke — or seemed to speak — for those who were hopeless, or helpless, or spiritually dispossessed.

As poetry, Eliot's expression was a bold and successful experiment to some, wholly incomprehensible to others. Certain critics praised

it for its suggestiveness and imagination, while others considered it willfully obscure and so meaningless as to belong to a "cult" of unintelligibility. Nevertheless, several of Eliot's shorter poems and many passages in the longer ones establish relations between beauty and the commonplace. The very opening of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" communicates a mood of disillusion and defeat, and the ensuing description of the fog is highly imaginative. (It is interesting to compare Eliot's characterization with Sandburg's "Fog" on page 127.) "Morning at the Window" and "Prelude" further illustrate Eliot's method of uniting harmony and discords, blending the mysterious with the trivial and tawdry.

Besides his poems, Eliot has published several volumes of criticism and interpretation. The best of these have been assembled in *Selected Essays 1917-1932*, and his eight lectures delivered at Harvard were published under the title *The Use of Poetry* (1933). Eliot has also several poetic plays to his credit, one of which, *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935), was effectively produced in England and America. Advanced readers will find a fairly comprehensive, though uncritical, account of the poet's work in *The Achievement of T. S. Eliot* (1935) by F. O. Matthiessen.

FROM "THE LOVE SONG OF
J. ALFRED PRUFROCK"

Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table;
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,
The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:
Streets that follow like a tedious argument
Of insidious intent
To lead you to an overwhelming question. . . .
Oh, do not ask, "What is it?"
Let us go and make our visit.

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes,
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,
Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,
And seeing that it was a soft October night,
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep . . .

MORNING AT THE WINDOW

They are rattling breakfast plates in basement kitchens,
And along the trampled edges of the street
I am aware of the damp souls of housemaids
Sprouting despondently at area gates.

The brown waves of fog toss up to me
Twisted faces from the bottom of the street,
And tear from a passer-by with muddy skirts
An aimless smile that hovers in the air
And vanishes along the level of the roofs.

PRELUDE

The winter evening settles down
With smells of steaks in passageways.
Six o'clock.
The burnt-out ends of smoky days.
And now a gusty shower wraps
The grimy scraps
Of withered leaves about his feet
And newspapers from vacant lots;
The showers beat
On broken blinds and chimney pots,
And at the corner of the street
A lonely cab-horse steams and stamps.
And then the lighting of the lamps.

John Crowe Ransom was born in Pulaski, Tennessee, April 30, 1888, of Scotch-Irish descent. Ransom was educated in his own state and abroad: he received his B.A. at Vanderbilt University in 1909, his B.A. at Oxford in 1913. He taught at Vanderbilt in Nashville, Tennessee, and at Kenyon College, Ohio. He was the chief instigator and one of the founders of *The Fugitive*.

Poems About God appeared in 1919, a raw first book with a tang of bitter humor. *Chills and Fever* (1924) and *Two Gentlemen in Bonds* (1927) are much more arresting. Here is a fastidiousness, an almost pedantic precision, rare in American letters. As a craftsman Ransom is fascinating as he shifts from suave whimsicality to acrid half-rhymes; as a philosopher he is equally original. Even though his verses are sometimes difficult, there can be no doubt that these crisp narratives and lyrics will, in spite of their peculiar idiom, find their definite and distinguished place. Nothing written by any contemporary has succeeded in being so teasing and, at the same time, so tender. "Lady Lost" and "Here Lies a Lady" combine his gifts.

Besides his poetry, Ransom has written much philosophical and critical prose; philosophy and criticism are combined in *The World's Body* (1938) which suggests a system relating to the meaning and psychology of poetry itself.

LADY LOST

This morning, there flew up the lane
A timid lady-bird to our bird-bath
And eyed her image dolefully as death;
This afternoon, knocked on our windowpane
To be let in from the rain.

And when I caught her eye
She looked aside, but at the clapping thunder
And sight of the whole earth blazing up like tinder
Looked in on us again most miserably,
Indeed as if she would cry.

So I will go out into the park and say,
"Who has lost a delicate brown-eyed lady
In the West End Section? Or has anybody
Injured some fine woman in some dark way,
Last night or yesterday?"

"Let the owner come and claim possession,
No questions will be asked. But stroke her gently
With loving words, and she will evidently
Resume her full soft-haired white-breasted fashion,
And her right home and her right passion."

PIAZZA PIECE

— I am a gentleman in a dustcoat trying
To make you hear. Your ears are soft and small
And listen to an old man not at all;
They want the young men's whispering and sighing.
But see the roses on your trellis dying
And hear the spectral singing of the moon —
For I must have my lovely lady soon.
I am a gentleman in a dustcoat trying.

— I am a lady young in beauty waiting
Until my truelove comes, and then we kiss.
But what gray man among the vines is this
Whose words are dry and faint as in a dream?
Back from my trellis, sir, before I scream!
I am a lady young in beauty waiting.

HERE LIES A LADY

Here lies a lady of beauty and high degree.
Of chills and fever she died, of fever and chills,
The delight of her husband, her aunts, an infant of three,
And of medicos marveling sweetly on her ills.

For either she burned, and her confident eyes would blaze,
And her fingers fly in a manner to puzzle their heads —
What was she making? Why, nothing; she sat in a maze
Of old scraps of laces, snipped into curious shreds —

Or this would pass, and the light of her fire decline
Till she lay discouraged and cold as a thin stalk white and
blown,

And would not open her eyes, to kisses, to wine.
The sixth of these states was her last; the cold settled down.

Sweet ladies, long may ye bloom, and toughly I hope ye may
thole,
But was she not lucky? In flowers and lace and mourning,
In love and great honor we bade God rest her soul
After six little spaces of chill, and six of burning.

MARGARET WIDDEMER

Margaret Widdemer was born at Doylestown, Pennsylvania, and began writing in her childhood. After graduating from Drexel Institute Library School in 1909, she contributed to various magazines; her first published verse "Factories" became her most quoted poem.

Miss Widdemer's poetic work has two distinct phases. In the one mood, she is the protesting poet, the champion of the down-trodden, the lyricist on fire with angry passion; in the other, she is the writer of well-made, polite and popular sentimental verse. Her finest poems are in *Factories with Other Lyrics* (1915), although several of her best songs are in *The Old Road to Paradise* (1918), which divided, with Sandburg's *Cornhuskers*, the Pulitzer Poetry Prize in 1918. *Cross Currents* (1921) and *Ballads and Lyrics* (1925) are more recent collections. *The Singing Wood* is a poetic play and *A Tree with a Bird in It* won the *Literary Review* prize for satires in 1923.

Miss Widdemer is also the author of several books of short stories and about fifteen novels.

FACTORIES

I have shut my little sister in from life and light
(For a rose, for a ribbon, for a wreath across my hair),
I have made her restless feet still until the night,
Locked from sweets of summer and from wild spring air;
I who ranged the meadowlands, free from sun to sun,
Free to sing and pull the buds and watch the far wings fly,
I have bound my sister till her playing time was done —
Oh, my little sister, was it I? Was it I?

I have robbed my sister of her day of maidenhood
(For a robe, for a feather, for a trinket's restless spark),
Shut from love till dusk shall fall, how shall she know good,
How shall she go scatheless through the sun-lit dark?
I who could be innocent, I who could be gay,
I who could have love and mirth before the light went by,
I have put my sister in her mating-time away —
Sister, my young sister, was it I? Was it I?

I have robbed my sister of the lips against her breast,
(For a coin, for the weaving of my children's lace and
lawn),
Feet that pace beside the loom, hands that cannot rest —
How can she know motherhood, whose strength is gone?
I who took no heed of her, starved and labor-worn,
I, against whose placid heart my sleepy gold-heads lie,
Round my path they cry to me, little souls unborn —
God of Life! Creator! It was I! It was I!

CONRAD AIKEN

Conrad (Potter) Aiken was born in Savannah, Georgia, August 5, 1889. He attended Harvard, was chosen class-poet, received his A.B. in 1912, married, and moved to Massachusetts. In 1921 he bought a house in Rye, Sussex; since then he has spent his time partly in England, partly in America.

His early work showed the influence of contemporary — and contrasting — poets: *Earth Triumphant and Other Tales in Verse* (1914) is an imitation of Masfield, *Turns and Movies* (1916) is derived from Masters. *The Jig of Forslin* (1916) is more original; the natural musician emerges in languid rhythms and haunting cadences.

This emphasis on melody increased with each subsequent volume: *Nocturne of Remembered Spring* (1917), *The Charnel Rose* (1918), and *The House of Death* (1920) are full of a tired but often beautiful music. Primarily a lyric poet, Aiken frequently condenses an emotion in a few lines; the music of the Morning Song from "Senlin" is rich with subtleties of rhythm. But it is much more than a lyrical movement. Beneath the flowing color of these lines, there is an enlarging whimsicality, an extraordinary summoning of the immensities that loom behind the casual moments of everyday.

Punch, the Immortal Liar (1921), in many ways Aiken's most appealing work, contains this poet's sharpest characterizations as well as his most beautiful symphonic effects. *Priapus and the Pool* (1922) discloses Aiken pre-eminently as a lyricist. Here are twenty-five songs, several of which are as subtly moving as those by any singer in America today. The succeeding volume, *The Pilgrimage of Festus* (1923), returns to the symphonic form.

The musical advance is established by *Selected Poems* (1929), which won the Pulitzer Prize for that year, *John Deth and Other Poems* (1930), and *Landscape West of Eden* (1933). All these deal with sets of symbols and dream pictures in a limbo of fantasy. The music of such meditative lyrics is pitched lower in the somber "preludes" of which Aiken has written a hundred or more. Sixty-three of these were published in *Preludes for Memnon* (1931).

Aiken has written a great deal of prose in many veins. The best of his criticism is in *Scepticisms* (1919) and the introduction to *Selected Poems of Emily Dickinson*, published in England in 1924. *Blue Voyage* (1927) is his most striking novel and *Bring! Bring!* (1925) his most successful volume of short stories. *King Coffin* (1935) is his most curious work, a psychological study of a neurotic and his "perfect" crime.

BREAD AND MUSIC

Music I heard with you was more than music,
And bread I broke with you was more than bread;
Now that I am without you, all is desolate;
All that was once so beautiful is dead.

Your hands once touched this table and this silver,
And I have seen your fingers hold this glass.
These things do not remember you, beloved,
And yet your touch upon them will not pass.

For it was in my heart you moved among them,
And blessed them with your hands and with your eyes;
And in my heart they will remember always, —
They knew you once, O beautiful and wise.

MIRACLES

Twilight is spacious, near things in it seem far,
And distant things seem near.
Now in the green west hangs a yellow star.
And now across old waters you may hear
The profound gloom of bells among still trees,
Like a rolling of huge boulders beneath seas.

Silent as thought in evening contemplation
Weaves the bat under the gathering stars.
Silent as dew, we seek new incarnation,
Meditate new avatars.

In a clear dusk like this
Mary climbed up the hill to seek her son,
To lower him down from the cross, and kiss
The mauve wounds, every one.

Men with wings
In the dusk walked softly after her.
She did not see them, but may have felt
The winnowed air around her stir;
She did not see them, but may have known
Why her son's body was light as a little stone.
She may have guessed that other hands were there
Moving the watchful air.

Now, unless persuaded by searching music
Which suddenly opens the portals of the mind,
We guess no angels,
And are contented to be blind.
Let us blow silver horns in the twilight,
And lift our hearts to the yellow star in the green,
To find perhaps, if, while the dew is rising,
Clear things may not be seen.

MORNING SONG FROM "SENLIN"

It is morning, Senlin says, and in the morning
When the light drips through the shutters like the dew,
I arise, I face the sunrise,
And do the things my fathers learned to do.
Stars in the purple dusk above the rooftops
Pale in a saffron mist and seem to die,
And I myself on a swiftly tilting planet
Stand before a glass and tie my tie.

Vine-leaves tap my window,
Dew-drops sing to the garden stones,
The robin chirps in the chinaberry tree
Repeating three clear tones.

It is morning. I stand by the mirror
And tie my tie once more.
While waves far off in a pale rose twilight
Crash on a white sand shore.
I stand by a mirror and comb my hair;
How small and white my face! —
The green earth tilts through a sphere of air
And bathes in a flame of space.
There are houses hanging above the stars
And stars hung under a sea . . .
And a sun far off in a shell of silence
Dapples my walls for me. . . .

It is morning, Senlin says, and in the morning
Should I not pause in the light to remember God?
Upright and firm I stand on a star unstable,
He is immense and lonely as a cloud.
I will dedicate this moment before my mirror
To him alone, for him I will comb my hair.
Accept these humble offerings, clouds of silence!
I will think of you as I descend the stair.

Vine-leaves tap my window,
The snail-track shines on the stones;
Dew-drops flash from the chinaberry tree
Repeating two clear tones.

It is morning, I awake from a bed of silence,
Shining I rise from the starless waters of sleep.
The walls are about me still as in the evening,
I am the same, and the same name still I keep.
The earth revolves with me, yet makes no motion,
The stars pale silently in a coral sky.
In a whistling void I stand before my mirror,
Unconcerned, and tie my tie.

There are horses neighing on far-off hills
Tossing their long white manes,
And mountains flash in the rose-white dusk,
Their shoulders black with rains. . . .
It is morning, I stand by the mirror
And surprise my soul once more;
The blue air rushes above my ceiling,
There are suns beneath my floor. . . .

. . . It is morning, Senlin says, I ascend from darkness
And depart on the winds of space for I know not where;
My watch is wound, a key in my pocket,
And the sky is darkened as I descend the stair.
There are shadows across the windows, clouds in heaven,
And a god among the stars; and I will go
Thinking of him as I might think of daybreak
And humming a tune I know. . . .

Vine-leaves tap at the window,
Dew-drops sing to the garden stones,
The robin chirps in the chinaberry tree
Repeating three clear tones.

FROM "THE ARGUMENT"

Do not believe this mighty grief
 Is more than breaking of a leaf.
 Summer can tear the elder blossom
 To redder pain than wounds a bosom.
 The numbed bee climbs, and climbs again,
 And faints at foot of window-pane.
 The sparrow, trammelled in tall grass,
 Knows terror deep as Jesus' was.

How wider, how much deeper then,
 The comprehensive grief of men,
 Who, in the universe of mind,
 The law itself of sorrow find!
 Although you catch the fainting bee
 And on Hymettus set her free,
 The multitudes remain, who die
 Alone, unheard, on Calvary.

These, though they be unseen, we know:
 They help our prize of grief to grow.
 How, then, can pain of mindless flowers,
 Or panic bird, be great as ours?
 Each aching leaf and claw is part
 Of that all-sympathizing heart.
 All grief it knows; and then knows too
 The grief of knowing that grief is true.

THE PUPPET DREAMS

There is a fountain in a wood
 Where wavering lies a moon:
 It plays to the slowly falling leaves
 A sleepy tune.

. . . The peach-trees lean upon a wall
 Of gold and ivory:
 The peacock spreads his tail, the leaves
 Fall silently. . . .

There, amid silken sounds and wine
And music idly broken,
The drowsy god observes his world
With no word spoken.

Arcturus, rise! Orion, fall! . . .
The white-winged stars obey. . . .
Or else he greets his Fellow-God;
And there, in the dusk, they play

A game of chess with stars for pawns
And a silver moon for queen:
Immeasurable as clouds, above
A chess-board world they lean

And thrust their hands amid their beards,
And utter words profound
That shake the star-swung firmament
With a fateful sound! . . .

. . . The peach-trees lean upon a wall
Of gold and ivory;
The peacock spreads his tail; the leaves
Fall silently. . . .

MAXWELL BODENHEIM

Maxwell Bodenheim was born at Natchez, Mississippi, May 26, 1892. His education, with the exception of grammar school training, was achieved under the guidance of the U. S. Army, in which Bodenheim served a full enlistment of three years, beginning in 1910. In 1918, his first volume appeared, and even those who were puzzled or repelled by Bodenheim's complex idiom were forced to recognize its intense individuality.

Minna and Myself (1918), *Advice* (1920), and *Introducing Irony* (1922) reveal, first of all, this poet's sensitivity to words. Words, under his hands, have unexpected growths. Sometimes he packs his metaphors so close that they become inextricably mixed. Sometimes he spins his fantasies so thin that the cord of coherence snaps and

the poem frays into unpatterned ravellings. But, at his best, in the realm of the whimsical-grotesque, Bodenheim walks with a light and nimble footstep. "Poet to His Love" and "Old Age" are extended metaphors as picturesque as they are personal.

His more recent work, which includes three novels, is more direct; even the titles indicate the attitude: *Against This Age* (1923), *The Sardonic Arm* (1924), and *Returning to Emotion* (1927).

POET TO HIS LOVE

An old silver church in a forest
Is my love for you.
The trees around it
Are words that I have stolen from your heart.
An old silver bell, the last smile you gave,
Hangs at the top of my church.
It rings only when you come through the forest
And stand beside it.
And then, it has no need for ringing,
For your voice takes its place.

OLD AGE

In me is a little painted square
Bordered by old shops with gaudy awnings.
And before the shops sit smoking, open-bloused old men,
Drinking sunlight.
The old men are my thoughts;
And I come to them each evening, in a creaking cart,
And quietly unload supplies.
We fill slim pipes and chat
And inhale scents from pale flowers in the center of the
square. . . .
Strong men, tinkling women, and squealing children
Stroll past us, or into the shops.
They greet the shopkeepers and touch their hats or foreheads
to me. . . .
Some evening I shall not return to my people.

Edna St. Vincent Millay was born February 22, 1892, in Rockland, Maine. Her childhood was spent in her native state, where she wrote her first and most famous poem ("Renascence"); a sponsor made it possible for her to come to New York and attend Vassar College, from which she was graduated in 1917. She then supported herself by writing short stories, by acting, and by translating. After her marriage she moved to a farm in the Berkshires, where she lives continuously except for periods of lecturing and travelling.

Renascence was published in 1917, but the title-poem had been written in 1911, when Miss Millay was nineteen. It was considered an extraordinary product for a young and unknown writer; it remains one of the most remarkable poems of this generation. Beginning like a child's aimless rhyme, it proceeds, with casual simplicity, to an amazing climax. It is as if a child had, in a tone of unsuspected clairvoyance, uttered some elemental truth. The cumulative effect of this poem is surpassed only by its sense of revelation. Although no other poem in the volume quite approaches it in power and beauty, there is much to delight the reader. "God's World" and the unnamed sonnets vibrate with the same quality.

A Few Figs from Thistles (1920) is a more sophisticated hooklet. It is a popular collection, but Miss Millay's least commendable performance. It is clever, self-conscious, and facile, a marked contrast to the volumes which preceded and followed it.

Second April (1921), containing the buoyant "The Poet and His Book" and the unforgettable "Elegy," is an intensification of her lyrical gift tintured with an increasing sadness. Her poetic play, *Aria da Capo*, first performed by the Provincetown Players in New York, was published in 1920. *The Harp-Weaver and Other Poems* (1924) — the title-poem was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for 1922 — wears its author's heart on its sleeve; often that organ is displayed as a shining toy, a decoration tricked with impudent ribbons. But Miss Millay begins to wear her heart with a difference. No longer brightly egotistic or consciously arch, she speaks with a disillusion that contains more than a tinge of bitterness. Some of the sonnets, which must be numbered among her finest creations, are likely to endure.

Notes of maturity and gravity grow increasingly with *The Buck in the Snow* (1928), *Fatal Interview* (1931), a quasi-Elizabethan sonnet sequence, *Wine from These Grapes* (1934), and *Conversation at Midnight* (1937). Frequently Miss Millay relies on an old and over-familiar rhetoric, but often the true and original utterance makes itself felt. The passion is intensely personal, the tone is romanticized and, at times, theatrical, but there is no question about the poet's technical mastery, and, beneath the literary skill, there can be heard the tone of authority.

A "critical biography," *Edna St. Vincent Millay and Her Times* (1936) by Elizabeth Atkins, is full of information, although it is too exuberant and inexact to serve as criticism.

ON HEARING A SYMPHONY OF BEETHOVEN

Sweet sounds, oh, beautiful music, do not cease!
Reject me not into the world again.
With you alone is excellence and peace,
Mankind made plausible, his purpose plain.
Enchanted in your air benign and shrewd,
With limbs a-sprawl and empty faces pale,
The spiteful and the stingy and the rude
Sleep like the scullions in the fairy-tale.

This moment is the best the world can give:
The tranquil blossom on the tortured stem.
Reject me not, sweet sounds! oh, let me live,
Till Doom espy my towers and scatter them,
A city spell-bound under the aging sun.
Music my rampart, and my only one.

RENASCENCE

All I could see from where I stood
Was three long mountains and a wood;
I turned and looked another way,
And saw three islands in a bay.
So with my eyes I traced the line
Of the horizon, thin and fine,
Straight around till I was come
Back to where I'd started from;
And all I saw from where I stood
Was three long mountains and a wood.
Over these things I could not see;
These were the things that bounded me;
And I could touch them with my hand,
Almost, I thought, from where I stand.

And all at once things seemed so small
My breath came short, and scarce at all.
But, sure, the sky is big, I said;
Miles and miles above my head;
So here upon my back I'll lie
And look my fill into the sky.
And so I looked, and, after all,
The sky was not so very tall.
The sky, I said, must somewhere stop,
And — sure enough! — I see the top!
The sky, I thought, is not so grand;
I 'most could touch it with my hand!
And, reaching up my hand to try,
I screamed to feel it touch the sky.

I screamed, and — lo! — Infinity
Came down and settled over me;
Forced back my scream into my chest,
Bent back my arm upon my breast,
And, pressing of the Undefined
The definition on my mind,
Held up before my eyes a glass
Through which my shrinking sight did pass
Until it seemed I must behold
Immensity made manifold;
Whispered to me a word whose sound
Deafened the air for worlds around,
And brought unmuffled to my ears
The gossiping of friendly spheres,
The creaking of the tented sky,
The ticking of Eternity.

I saw and heard, and knew at last
The How and Why of all things, past,
And present, and forevermore.
The universe, cleft to the core,
Lay open to my probing sense
That, sickening, I would fain pluck thence
But could not, — nay! But needs must suck

At the great wound, and could not pluck
My lips away till I had drawn
All venom out. — Ah, fearful pawn!
For my omniscience I paid toll
In infinite remorse of soul.
All sin was of my sinning, all
Atoning mine, and mine the gall
Of all regret. Mine was the weight
Of every brooded wrong, the hate
That stood behind each envious thrust,
Mine every greed, mine every lust.
And all the while for every grief,
Each suffering, I craved relief
With individual desire, —
Craved all in vain! And felt fierce fire
About a thousand people crawl;
Perished with each, — then mourned for all!
A man was starving in Capri;
He moved his eyes and looked at me;
I felt his gaze, I heard his moan,
And knew his hunger as my own.
I saw at sea a great fog-bank
Between two ships that struck and sank;
A thousand screams the heavens smote;
And every scream tore through my throat;
No hurt I did not feel, no death
That was not mine; mine each last breath
That, crying, met an answering cry
From the compassion that was I.
All suffering mine, and mine its rod;
Mine, pity like the pity of God.
Ah, awful weight! Infinity
Pressed down upon the finite Me!
My anguished spirit, like a bird,
Beating against my lips I heard;
Yet lay the weight so close about
There was no room for it without.
And so beneath the weight lay I
And suffered death, but could not die.

Long had I lain thus, craving death,
When quietly the earth beneath
Gave way, and inch by inch, so great
At last had grown the crushing weight,
Into the earth I sank till I
Full six feet under ground did lie,
And sank no more, — there is no weight
Can follow here, however great.
From off my breast I felt it roll,
And as it went my tortured soul
Burst forth and fled in such a gust
That all about me swirled the dust.

Deep in the earth I rested now;
Cool is its hand upon the brow
And soft its breast beneath the head
Of one who is so gladly dead.
And all at once, and over all,
The pitying rain began to fall.
I lay and heard each pattering hoof
Upon my lowly, thatched roof,
And seemed to love the sound far more
Than ever I had done before.
For rain it hath a friendly sound
To one who's six feet underground;
And scarce the friendly voice or face:
A grave is such a quiet place.

The rain, I said, is kind to come
And speak to me in my new home.
I would I were alive again
To kiss the fingers of the rain,
To drink into my eyes the shine
Of every slanting silver line,
To catch the freshened, fragrant breeze
From drenched and dripping apple-trees.
For soon the shower will be done,
And then the broad face of the sun
Will laugh above the rain-soaked earth

Until the world with answering mirth
Shakes joyously, and each round drop
Rolls, twinkling, from its grass-blade top.
How can I bear it; buried here,
While overhead the sky grows clear
And blue again after the storm?
O, multi-colored, multiform,
Belovèd beauty over me,
That I shall never, never see
Again! Spring-silver, autumn-gold,
That I shall never more behold!
Sleeping your myriad magics through,
Close-sepulchered away from you!
O God, I cried, give me new birth,
And put me back upon the earth!
Upset each cloud's gigantic gourd
And let the heavy rain, down-poured
In one big torrent, set me free,
Washing my grave away from me!

I ceased; and, through the breathless hush
That answered me, the far-off rush
Of herald wings came whispering
Like music down the vibrant string
Of my ascending prayer, and — crash!
Before the wild wind's whistling lash
The startled storm-clouds reared on high
And plunged in terror down the sky,
And the big rain in one black wave
Fell from the sky and struck my grave.

I know not how such things can be,
I only know there came to me
A fragrance such as never clings
To aught save happy living things;
A sound as of some joyous elf
Singing sweet songs to please himself,
And, through and over everything,
A sense of glad awakening.

The grass, a-tiptoe at my ear,
Whispering to me I could hear;
I felt the rain's cool finger-tips
Brushed tenderly across my lips,
Laid gently on my sealed sight,
And all at once the heavy night
Fell from my eyes and I could see, —
A drenched and dripping apple-tree,
A last long line of silver rain,
A sky grown clear and blue again.
And as I looked a quickening gust
Of wind blew up to me and thrust
Into my face a miracle
Of orchard-breath, and with the smell, —
I know not how such things can be! —
I breathed my soul back into me.

Ah! Up then from the ground sprang I
And hailed the earth with such a cry
As is not heard save from a man
Who has been dead and lives again.
About the trees my arms I wound;
Like one gone mad I hugged the ground;
I raised my quivering arms on high;
I laughed and laughed into the sky,
Till at my throat a strangling sob
Caught fiercely, and a great heart-throb
Sent instant tears into my eyes.
O God, I cried, no dark disguise
Can e'er hereafter hide from me
Thy radiant identity!
Thou canst not move across the grass
But my quick eyes will see Thee pass,
Nor speak, however silently,
But my hushed voice will answer Thee.
I know the path that tells Thy way
Through the cool eve of every day;
God, I can push the grass apart
And lay my finger on Thy heart!

The world stands out on either side
No wider than the heart is wide;
Above the world is stretched the sky, —
No higher than the soul is high.
The heart can push the sea and land
Farther away on either hand;
The soul can split the sky in two,
And let the face of God shine through.
But East and West will pinch the heart
That cannot keep them pushed apart;
And he whose soul is flat — the sky
Will cave in on him by and by.

THE ANGUISH

I would to God I were quenched and fed
As in my youth
From the flask of song, and the good bread
Of beauty richer than truth.

The anguish of the world is on my tongue.
My bowl is filled to the brim with it; there is more than I
can eat.
Happy are the toothless old and the toothless young,
That cannot rend this meat.

PITY ME NOT

Pity me not because the light of day
At close of day no longer walks the sky;
Pity me not for beauties passed away
From field and thicket as the year goes by;
Pity me not the waning of the moon,
Nor that the ebbing tide goes out to sea,
Nor that a man's desire is hushed so soon,
And you no longer look with love on me.

This have I known always: love is no more
Than the wide blossom which the wind assails;
Than the great tide that treads the shifting shore,

Strewing fresh wreckage gathered in the gales.
Pity me that the heart is slow to learn
What the swift mind beholds at every turn.

ELEGY

Let them bury your big eyes
In the secret earth securely,
Your thin fingers, and your fair,
Soft, indefinite-colored hair, —
All of these in some way, surely,
From the secret earth shall rise.
Not for these I sit and stare,
Broken and bereft completely;
Your young flesh that sat so neatly
On your little bones will sweetly
Blossom in the air.

But your voice, — never the rushing
Of a river underground,
Not the rising of the wind
In the trees before the rain,
Not the woodcock's watery call,
Not the note the white-throat utters,
Not the feet of children pushing
Yellow leaves along the gutters
In the blue and bitter fall,
Shall content my musing mind
For the beauty of that sound
That in no new way at all
Ever will be heard again.

Sweetly through the sappy stalk
Of the vigorous weed,
Holding all it held before,
Cherished by the faithful sun,
On and on eternally
Shall your altered fluid run,
Bud and bloom and go to seed.

But your singing days are done;
But the music of your talk
Never shall the chemistry
Of the secret earth restore.
All your lovely words are spoken.
Once the ivory box is broken,
Beats the golden bird no more.

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

Archibald MacLeish was born in Glencoe, Illinois, May 7, 1892. His career at Yale, from which he graduated with the class of 1915, was brilliant and versatile. Football and water-polo were his athletic interests; he was honored by the oldest undergraduate organizations; he was chairman of the *Yale Literary Monthly* and a member of Phi Beta Kappa. After college, MacLeish studied law, became a Lieutenant in the artillery, and returned to graduate at the head of his class at the Harvard Law School. After a few years in Boston, he gave up the practice of law to devote his time to literature.

Tower of Ivory (1917) gave few hints of the unusual talent that was revealed in *The Happy Marriage* (1924), *The Pot of Earth* (1925), and the curious *Nobodaddy* (1925). In these volumes MacLeish shows the influence of several contemporaries, particularly Aiken, Robinson, Pound, and Eliot, but his own inflection struggles through.

In *Streets in the Moon* (1926) the complete poet emerges. Here MacLeish speaks in his recognizable idiom; the subject matter, conceived in amplitude, conveys an extraordinary sense of space and time, even the "sense of infinity." By the skillful use of assonance, half-rhyme, repetition, and suspense, this poet achieves new effects in the traditional forms, even in so classic a form as the sonnet, *vide* "The End of the World." "Ars Poetica" is more than an extension of poetic language; beneath its experiments in timing, interior rhyme and suspension, it says a number of pointed and profound things which have nothing to do with timeliness.

A growing power and originality are manifest in *The Hamlet of A. MacLeish* (1928), *New Found Land* (1930), *Conquistador* (1932), which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1933, and the carefully selected *Poems 1924-1933*. MacLeish devotes himself more and more to contemporary subjects with increasing success. This is proved by *Public Speech* (1936), and by the poetic plays *Panic* (1935) and *The Fall of the City*, a drama about dictatorship, written for the radio.

Through his peculiar blend of narration and meditation, of experiment and accomplishment, MacLeish makes himself one of the most interesting poets of his period.

"You, Andrew Marvell" is an excellent example of MacLeish's individuality. Difficult at first reading, it soon discloses rich and varied effects. The suspense is heightened by the phrases depicting the gradual approach of night; it is intensified by the lack of punctuation; it is sustained by the gathering force of the one long sentence. A further effect is achieved by the choice of words; every epithet is precise and suggestive, neither too vague nor too vivid. The pale, almost colorless light and the unearthly chill of darkness are set off by the warm syllables and colorful associations of Persia, Baghdad, Arabia, Palmyra, Crete, and Kermanshah. Even the title, at first obscure, adds a final overtone to the poem. The seventeenth century poet, Andrew Marvell, addressed a poem "To His Coy Mistress," in which he reminded her that the sun refuses to stand still and that

... at my back I always hear
Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near.

Soon, says the twentieth century MacLeish, time will pass and the flooding dark will engulf this hill and these hearts again. "You, Andrew Marvell," muses the modern poet, "you, too, felt this almost three centuries ago."

ARS POETICA

A poem should be palpable and mute
As a globed fruit

Dumb
As old medallions to the thumb

Silent as the sleeve-worn stone
Of casement ledges where the moss has grown —

A poem should be wordless
As the flight of birds . . .

A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs

Leaving, as the moon releases
Twig by twig the night-entangled trees,

Leaving, as the moon behind the winter leaves,
Memory by memory the mind —

A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs . . .

A poem should be equal to:
Not true

For all the history of grief
An empty doorway and a maple leaf

For love
The leaning grasses and two lights above the sea —

A poem should not mean
But be.

THE END OF THE WORLD

Quite unexpectedly as Vasserot
The armless ambidextrian was lighting
A match between his great and second toe
And Ralph the lion was engaged in biting
The neck of Mme. Sossman while the drum
Pointed, and Teeny was about to cough
In waltz-time swinging Jocko by the thumb —
Quite unexpectedly the top blew off:

And there, there overhead, there, there, hung over
Those thousands of white faces, those dazed eyes,
There in the starless dark, the poise, the hover,
There with vast wings across the canceled skies,
There in the sudden blackness, the black pall
Of nothing, nothing, nothing — nothing at all.

YOU, ANDREW MARVELL

And here face down beneath the sun
And here upon earth's noonward height
To feel the always coming on
The always rising of the night

To feel creep up the curving east
The earthly chill of dusk and slow
Upon those under lands the vast
And ever-climbing shadow grow

And strange at Ecbatan the trees
Take leaf by leaf the evening strange
The flooding dark about their knees
The mountains over Persia change

And now at Kermanshah the gate
Dark empty and the withered grass
And through the twilight now the late
Few travelers in the westward pass

And Baghdad darken and the bridge
Across the silent river gone
And through Arabia the edge
Of evening widen and steal on

And deepen on Palmyra's street
The wheel rut in the ruined stone
And Lebanon fade out and Crete
High through the clouds and overblown

And over Sicily the air
Still flashing with the landward gulls
And loom and slowly disappear
The sails above the shadowy hulls

And Spain go under and the shore
Of Africa the gilded sand

And evening vanish and no more
The low pale light across that land

Nor now the long light on the sea —

And here face downward in the sun
To feel how swift how secretly
The shadow of the night comes on . . .

IMMORTAL AUTUMN

I speak this poem now with grave and level voice
In praise of autumn of the far-horn-winding fall
I praise the flower-barren fields the clouds the tall
Unanswering branches where the wind makes sullen noise

I praise the fall it is the human season now
No more the foreign sun does meddle at our earth
Enforce the green and thaw the frozen soil to birth
Nor winter yet weigh all with silence the pine bough

But now in autumn with the black and outcast crows
Share we the spacious world the whispering year is gone
There is more room to live now the once secret dawn
Comes late by daylight and the dark unguarded goes

Between the mutinous brave burning of the leaves
And winter's covering of our hearts with his deep snow
We are alone there are no evening birds we know
The naked moon the tame stars circle at our eaves

It is the human season on this sterile air
Do words outcarry breath the sound goes on and on
I hear a dead man's cry from autumn long since gone

I cry to you beyond this bitter air.

Elizabeth Coatsworth was born in 1893 in Buffalo, New York. After extended travels she returned to America, where she divides her time between Maine and an old house overlooking the harbor of Hingham, Massachusetts.

Miss Coatsworth made her debut with *Fox Footprints* (1921), a group of images and studies in the Oriental mood. *Atlas and Beyond* (1924) is a far more original work, although it, too, finds its subjects overseas. *Compass Rose* (1929) contains not only her most native but her most winning poetry. Most of the verses are highly suggestive; the author is one for whom the fact is but the means to a fantastic end. Often, as in "A Lady Comes to an Inn," she suggests an odd or faintly terrifying story without telling the details; she is content to whisper the illuminating "hints" and let the reader's imagination fill in the alluring outline.

Miss Coatsworth is also the author of a racy novel and many books for young people, her prose being liberally interspersed with rhymes.

A LADY COMES TO AN INN

Three strange men came to the inn,
One was a black man pocked and thin,
One was brown with a silver knife,
And one brought with him a beautiful wife.

That lovely woman had hair as pale
As French champagne or finest ale,
That lovely woman was long and slim
As a young white birch or a maple limb.

Her face was like cream, her mouth was a rose,
What language she spoke nobody knows,
But sometimes she'd scream like a cockatoo
And swear wonderful oaths that nobody knew.

Her great silk skirts like a silver bell
Down to her little bronze slippers fell,
And her low-cut gown showed a dove on its nest
In blue tattooing across her breast.

Nobody learned the lady's name
Nor the marvelous land from which they came,
But no one in all the countryside
Has forgotten those men and that beautiful bride.

DOROTHY PARKER

Dorothy Rothschild was born in West End, New Jersey, August 22, 1893. Her father was Jewish, her mother Scotch. She attended Miss Dana's School in Morristown, New Jersey, and the Blessed Sacred Convent in New York. She says that the only thing she learned at school was that if you spit on a pencil eraser it will erase ink.

She came to New York, wrote verse and short stories, married Edwin Pond Parker, became a dramatic critic and book-reviewer, and was quoted widely (and often falsely) for her witty thrusts and malicious epigrams. After a divorce from Parker, she married Alan Campbell, the actor, with whom she wrote scenarios in Hollywood. She is "slightly over five feet in height, dark, with somewhat weary eyes and a sad mouth. She is superstitious and hates to be alone; flowers and a good cry are said to be among her favorite diversions."

Her first book of prose, *Laments for the Living* (1930), contains several remarkable short stories, one of which ("Big Blonde") won the O. Henry Memorial prize. But it is as a poet that she is best known. The contents of her three volumes — *Enough Rope* (1927), *Sunset Gun* (1928), and *Death and Taxes* (1931) — were collected in *Not So Deep as a Well* (1936). Most of this poetry plays bitter variations on the theme of frustrated love, but the lines are so neatly turned, the twists so surprising, that the reader is always amused and often charmed. Mrs. Parker has a way of expressing heartbreak by a "wisecrack"; when she is most caustic she is often most convincing. Although her self-dramatizing tends to degenerate into a formula, the best of her work turns wry grimaces into genuine lyric poetry.

LOVE SONG

My own dear love, he is strong and bold
And he cares not what comes after.
His words ring sweet as a chime of gold,
And his eyes are lit with laughter.

He is jubilant as a flag unfurled;
Oh, a girl, she'd not forget him.
My own dear love, he is all my world —
And I wish I'd never met him.

My love, he's mad, and my love, he's fleet,
And a wild young wood-thing bore him.
The ways are fair to his roaming feet,
And the skies are sunlit for him.
As sharply sweet to my heart he seems
As the fragrance of acacia.
My own dear love, he is all my dreams —
And I wish he were in Asia.

My love runs by like a day in June,
And he makes no friends of sorrows.
He'll tread his galloping rigadon
In the pathway of the morrows.
He'll live his days where the sunbeams start,
Nor could storm nor wind uproot him.
My own dear love, he is all my heart —
And I wish somebody'd shoot him.

AUTUMN VALENTINE

In May my heart was breaking —
Oh, wide the wound, and deep!
And bitter it beat at waking,
And sore it split in sleep.
And when it came November,
I sought my heart, and sighed,
"Poor thing, do you remember?"
"What heart was that?" it cried.

LOUIS GINSBERG

Louis Ginsberg was born October 1, 1896, at Newark, New Jersey. He attended Rutgers and Columbia University, and received his M.A. in 1924. Since graduation, he has divided his time between

writing and teaching English in the Central High School, Paterson, New Jersey.

The Altic of the Past (1920) and *The Everlasting Minute* (1937) show various influences, none of which fail to hide the lyricist. Ginsberg's recent poems are not only swifter in technique but clearer in the communication of "the glory of the commonplace." The poem here reprinted illustrates that gift; it is interesting to compare Ginsberg's treatment of the theme with Sandburg's (page 127) and Eliot's (page 209) use of the same subject.

FOG

Here in this world of fog like amethyst,
Harshness has now been sponged away by mist.

The hardest, sternest lines relent and cease
Their cruelty, while angles cradle peace.

The blurry walks are sown with phantom feet,
While glamour drizzles slowly on the street.

As glory smolders through the foggy veil,
A trolley crawls, a phosphorescent snail.

Tall buildings once so arrogant to see
Wilt to a white and gossamer frailty.

This mist can make the meanest side street be
Password and threshold for a mystery.

Blest is this mist that muffles sense and sound;
For, lest a cruel, heedless sun should pound

Merciless deserts of a blinding light,
Fog will bestow its gift of second sight!

STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT

Stephen Vincent Benét, the younger brother of William Rose Benét, was born at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in July, 1898. He was

educated in various parts of the country, and graduated from Yale in 1919.

At seventeen he published a small book containing six dramatic portraits, *Five Men and Pompey* (1915), a set of monologs little short of astounding, coming from a schoolboy. In Benét's next volume, *Young Adventure* (1918), one hears something more than the speech of an infant prodigy; the precocious facility has developed into undoubted vigor.

Heavens and Earth (1920) and *Tiger Joy* (1925) have a wider imaginative sweep. The latter volume contains several vigorous and wholly American ballads. This native quality is the outstanding feature of *John Brown's Body* (1928), the book which made Benét famous and which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize. Here is a long narrative poem so varied in style and treatment that it reads as easily as a novel. No single passage can be cited as great poetry, but the speed and activity of the whole give the work a continual stimulation and no little power.

PORTRAIT OF A BOY

After the whipping, he crawled into bed;
Accepting the harsh fact with no great weeping.
How funny uncle's hat had looked striped red!
He chuckled silently. The moon came, sweeping
A black frayed rag of tattered cloud before
In scorning; very pure and pale she seemed,
Flooding his bed with radiance. On the floor
Fat motes danced. He sobbed; closed his eyes and dreamed.

Warm sand flowed round him. Blurts of crimson light
Splashed the white grains like blood. Past the cave's mouth
Shone with a large fierce splendor, wildly bright,
The crooked constellations of the South;
Here the Cross swung; and there, affronting Mars,
The Centaur stormed aside a froth of stars.
Within, great casks like wattled aldermen
Sighed of enormous feasts, and cloth of gold
Glowed on the walls like hot desire. Again,
Beside webbed purples from some galleon's hold,
A black chest bore the skull and bones in white
Above a scrawled "Gunpowder!" By the flames,

Decked out in crimson, gemmed with syenite,
Hailing their fellows by outrageous names
The pirates sat and dined. Their eyes were moons.
"Doubloons!" they said. The words crashed gold. "Doubloons!"

1935

All night they marched, the infantrymen under pack,
But the hands gripping the rifles were naked bone
And the hollow pits of the eyes stared, vacant and black,
When the moonlight shone.

The gas mask lay like a blot on the empty chest,
The slanting helmets were spattered with rust and mold,
But they burrowed the hill for the machine-gun nest
As they had of old.

And the guns rolled, and the tanks, but there was no sound,
Never the gasp or rustle of living men
Where the skeletons strung their wire on disputed ground. . .
I knew them, then.

"It is seventeen years," I cried. "You must come no more.
We know your names. We know that you are the dead.
Must you march forever from France and the last, blind
war?"

"*Fool! From the next!*" they said.

NANCY HANKS¹

If Nancy Hanks
Came back as a ghost,
Seeking news
Of what she loved most,

¹ From *A Book of Americans*, a collaboration by Stephen Vincent Benét and his wife, Rosemary Carr Benét. Nancy Hanks was the mother of Lincoln.

She'd ask first
"Where's my son?
What's happened to Abe?
What's he done?"

"Poor little Abe,
Left all alone
Except for Tom,
Who's a rolling stone;
He was only nine
The year I died;
I remember still
How hard he cried.

"Scraping along
In a little shack,
With hardly a shirt
To cover his back,
And a prairie wind
To blow him down,
Or pinching times
If he went to town.

"You wouldn't know
About my son?
Did he grow tall?
Did he have fun?
Did he learn to read?
Did he get to town?
Do you know his name?
Did he get on?"

L É O N I E A D A M S

Léonie Adams was born in Brooklyn, New York, December 9, 1899. She became a member of the class of 1922 at Barnard College, where she wrote her first published poems "in secret." While still an undergraduate, her remarkable "April Mortality" was printed in *The New Republic*, but, although this would have been sufficient

stimulus for most young authors to rush into print, Miss Adams became more reticent than ever and rarely wrote for publication.

It was only through the persuasion of three of her friends that her volume, *Those Not Elect* (1925), was made ready for the press. The author's own evasion of "realism" is apparent in all her poetry. The poems themselves are of two sorts: the younger and simpler verses, full of a shy ecstasy, and the later, more metaphysical expressions of a rare and not so easily communicable wonder. Whatever her style, there is no mistaking either her restraint or the beauty of her suggestions.

In 1928 Miss Adams was awarded a fellowship by the Guggenheim Foundation and went abroad for two years; after her return she taught at New York University and Bennington College. Her second volume, *High Falcon* (1929), carries on the tradition of a poetry which is so pure that it is almost abstract. Although much of it seems involved and metaphysical at first glance, every figure is firm and uplifted and every phrase has the accent of authority.

HOME-COMING

When I stepped homeward to my hill
Dusk went before with quiet tread;
The bare laced branches of the trees
Were as a mist about its head.

Upon its leaf-brown breast, the rocks
Like great gray sheep lay silent-wise;
Between the birch trees' gleaming arms,
The faint stars trembled in the skies.

The white brook met me half-way up
And laughed as one that knew me well,
To whose more clear than crystal voice
The frost had joined a crystal spell.

The skies lay like pale-watered deep.
Dusk ran before me to its strand
And cloudily leaned forth to touch
The moon's slow wonder with her hand.

APRIL MORTALITY

Rebellion shook an ancient dust,
And bones bleached dry of rottenness
Said: Heart, be bitter still, nor trust
The earth, the sky, in their bright dress.

Heart, heart, dost thou not break to know
This anguish thou wilt bear alone?
We sang of it an age ago,
And traced it dimly upon stone.

With all the drifting race of men
Thou also art begot to mourn
That she is crucified again,
The lonely Beauty yet unborn.

And if thou dreamest to have won
Some touch of her in permanence,
'Tis the old cheating of the sun,
The intricate lovely play of sense.

Be bitter still, remember how
Four petals, when a little breath
Of wind made stir the pear-tree bough,
Blew delicately down to death.

LULLABY

Hush, lullay,
Your treasures all
Encrust with rust.
Your trinket pleasures
Fall
To dust.
Beneath the sapphire arch
Upon the grassy floor
Is nothing more

To hold,
 And play is over old.
 Your eyes
 In sleepy fever gleam,
 Your lids droop
 To their dream.
 You wander late alone,
 The flesh frets on the bone,
 Your love fails
 In your breast.
 Here is the pillow.
 Rest.

DOROTHY E. REID

Dorothy E. Reid was born in 1900 in Bucyrus, Ohio. At Ohio State University, from which she was graduated in 1925, she won the annual Vandewater Prize and was editor-in-chief of *The Candle*, a magazine of "revolt against opinionless student life." After some school teaching and newspaper work, she engaged in advertising in Columbus, Ohio.

Coach Into Pumpkin (1925) is the work of a beginner, but a beginner with charm and sensitivity. The unusual turn of phrase is evident even in her less successful poems; the poet possesses a "point of view" which is as "different" as her personal blend of observation and fantasy. This combination grows firmer in her later work which fluctuates between lightness and poignance.

MRS. WINKELSTEINER

Mrs. Winkelsteiner
 Made songs in her head;
 You went to borrow eggs,
 You got songs instead,

 Or a song about eggs
 And the eggs in a sack;
 It wasn't very long
 Till you hurried right back.

Mrs. Winkelsteiner
Sat around the room;
Her three brown daughters
Were handy with the broom,

And handy with the iron,
And handy with the bread;
But Mrs. Winkelsteiner
Made songs in her head.

*"Little birdie in the tree,
Chirp a song to me."*

*"Red cow sitting in the sun,
Waiting for farmer to come."*

*"Eggs so smooth and round,
Hens lay them on the ground."*

Mrs. Winkelsteiner's
Been a long time dead,
And all the songs she knew
Are cold in her head.

You go after eggs
And the eggs are in a sack,
It isn't very often
That you want to go back

Where the birds still chirp,
And the hens still call,
And the three brown daughters
Never sing at all.

MEN

I like men.
They stride about,
They reach in their pockets
And pull things out;

DOROTHY E. REID

They look important,
They rock on their toes,
They lose all the buttons
Off their clothes;

They throw away pipes,
They find them again.
Men are queer creatures;
I like men.

LANGSTON HUGHES

Langston Hughes was born February 1, 1902, in Joplin, Missouri, was graduated from Central High School in Cleveland, and at eighteen became a teacher of English in Mexico. He spent a year at Columbia University and some time as a worker on the high seas. After ten months in France, he worked his way through Italy and Spain, and returned to New York with twenty-five cents. Working as a busboy in Washington, he was discovered by Vachel Lindsay, who read several of his poems to a fashionable audience in the very hotel in which Hughes carried trays of dishes.

The Weary Blues, Hughes' first volume, appeared in 1926. One of the poems had already won first prize in a magazine which fostered creative work by Negroes. Hughes' poetry, appearing at the same time as Countee Cullen's, justified those who claimed we were witnessing a revival of Negro art. Hughes was the first to express the spirit of the blues in words. In his note to his second volume, *Fine Clothes to the Jew* (1927), he writes, "The *Blues*, unlike the *Spirituals*, have a strict poetic pattern; one long line repeated and a third line to rhyme with the first two. . . . The mood of the *Blues* is almost always despondency, but when they are sung people laugh."

Although at least half of Hughes' work centers about the Blues, much of his poetry is grim in an essentially modern manner. His portraits of Negro workmen (in the remarkable "Brass Spittoons" with symbols similar to those in Anna Hempstead Branch's "The Monk in the Kitchen" on page 98) are more memorable than those produced by any of his compatriots.

Dear Lovely Death (1931) is a proof that Hughes can turn from the "popular" to the proletarian and still remain on the level of poetry. His play *Mulatto* was produced early in 1936.

HOMESICK BLUES

De railroad bridge's
A sad song in de air.
De railroad bridge's
A sad song in de air.
Ever time de trains pass
I wants to go somewhere.

I went down to de station;
Ma heart was in ma mouth.
Went down to de station;
Heart was in ma mouth.
Lookin' for a box car
To roll me to de South.

Homesick blues, Lawd,
'S a terrible thing to have.
Homesick blues is
A terrible thing to have.
To keep from cryin'
I opens ma mouth an' laughs.

BRASS SPITTOONS

Clean the spittoons, boy.
Detroit,
Chicago,
Atlantic City,
Palm Beach.
Clean the spittoons.
The steam in hotel kitchens,
And the smoke in hotel lobbies,
And the slime in hotel spittoons:
Part of my life.
Hey, boy!
A nickel,
A dime,
A dollar,
Two dollars a day.

Hey, boy!
A nickel,
A dime,
A dollar,
Two dollars
Buys shoes for the baby.
House rent to pay.
Church on Sunday.
My God!

Babies and church
and women and Sunday
all mixed up with dimes and
dollars and clean spittoons
and house rent to pay.
Hey, boy!

A bright bowl of brass is beautiful to the Lord.
Bright polished brass like the cymbals
Of King David's dancers,
Like the wine cups of Solomon.
Hey, boy!
A clean spittoon on the altar of the Lord.
A clean bright spittoon all newly polished, —
At least I can offer that.
Com' mere, boy!

COUNTEE CULLEN

Countee Cullen was born in New York City, May 30, 1903. He was educated in the New York schools and New York University, and was graduated with the class of 1925.

When *The Book of American Negro Poetry* was published in 1922, Cullen was still in his 'teens. Had the anthology been collected three years later, a selection from Cullen's work would have been one of its outstanding features. Beginning in 1924, poems by this hitherto unknown Negro began appearing in various magazines; within a year his name had reached the literary circles. A firmness of execution, a boldness of style, and a gift of epigram were apparent in his work. Cullen's first volume, *Color*, appeared in 1925 and disclosed a

brilliance which makes one willing to overlook the poet's influences. Although this volume and the subsequent *Copper Sun* (1927) reveal little that is definitely Negro in idiom or rhythm (differing greatly from Langston Hughes), Cullen's background has, to some extent, conditioned his subject-matter.

The Ballad of the Brown Girl (1927) appeared in the same year as his anthology of Negro verse, *Caroling Dusk*.

SIMON THE CYRENIAN SPEAKS

He never spoke a word to me,
And yet he called my name.
He never gave a sign to see,
And yet I knew and came.

At first I said, "I will not bear
His cross upon my back —
He only seeks to place it there
Because my skin is black."

But He was dying for a dream,
And He was very meek;
And in His eyes there shone a gleam
Men journey far to seek.

It was Himself my pity bought;
I did for Christ alone
What all of Rome could not have wrought
With bruise of lash or stone.

FROM THE DARK TOWER

We shall not always plant while others reap
The golden increment of bursting fruit,
Nor always countenance, abject and mute,
That lesser men should hold their brothers cheap;
Not everlastingly while others sleep
Shall we beguile their limbs with mellow flute,
Not always bend to some more subtle brute.
We were not made eternally to weep.

The night, whose sable breast relieves the stark,
White stars, is no less lovely being dark;
And there are buds that cannot bloom at all
In light, but crumple, piteous, and fall.
So in the dark we hide the heart that bleeds,
And wait, and tend our agonizing needs.

OGDEN NASH

Ogden Nash was born August 19, 1903, in Rye, New York, of a distinguished and, seemingly, ubiquitous family. He claims to have had ten thousand cousins in North Carolina; his great-great-grandfather was Revolutionary Governor of the State, and the latter's brother, General Francis Nash, gave his name to Nashville, Tennessee. Ogden Nash entered Harvard in the class of 1924, but left after one year. He spent another year at St. George's School in Rhode Island, where, he says, he lost his entire nervous system carving lamb for a table of fourteen-year-olds.

To continue his biography in his own words: "Came to New York to make my fortune as a bond salesman; in two years I sold one bond — to my godmother. However, I saw a lot of good movies. Next went to work writing car cards. After two years of that I landed in the advertising department of Doubleday. That was 1925, and I Doubledayed until 1931." After 1931, Nash engaged in a succession of varied activities: he was on the staff of *The New Yorker*, became associated with two publishing firms, married and lived in Baltimore, had two daughters and moved to Hollywood, where he wrote — or rewrote — scenarios.

The best of Nash is in *Free Wheeling* (1931), *The Bad Parent's Garden of Verse* (1936), and *I'm a Stranger Here Myself* (1938); but all his volumes are characterized by rollicking spirits, shrewd satire, and a slightly insane manner. The style is bantering, but the end is often a kind of social criticism. For most readers, however, Nash's charm lies in his irresponsible absurdities, in the impudent rhymes which do not quite rhyme, and his way of giving a new twist to an old subject. He can be witty, surprising, and nonsensical at the same time. An incisive example of Nash's "steel-fist-in-velvet-glove" manner is quoted on page 451.

THE RHINOCEROS

The rhino is a homely beast,
 For human eyes he's not a feast,
 But you and I will never know
 Why nature chose to make him so.
 Farewell, farewell, you old rhinoceros,
 I'll stare at something less prepoceros!

ADVENTURES OF ISABEL

Isabel met an enormous bear;
 Isabel, Isabel, didn't care.
 The bear was hungry, the bear was ravenous,
 The bear's big mouth was cruel and cavernous.
 The bear said, Isabel, glad to meet you,
 How do, Isabel, now I'll eat you!
 Isabel, Isabel, didn't worry,
 Isabel didn't scream or scurry.
 She washed her hands and she straightened her hair up,
 Then Isabel quietly ate the bear up.

Once on a night as black as pitch
 Isabel met a wicked old witch.
 The witch's face was cross and wrinkled,
 The witch's gums with teeth were sprinkled.
 Ho, ho, Isabel! the old witch crowed,
 I'll turn you into an ugly toad!
 Isabel, Isabel, didn't worry,
 Isabel didn't scream or scurry.
 She showed no rage and she showed no rancor,
 But she turned the witch into milk and drank her.

Isabel met a hideous giant,
 Isabel continued self-reliant.
 The giant was hairy, the giant was horrid,
 He had one eye in the middle of his forehead.
 Good morning, Isabel, the giant said,
 I'll grind your bones to make my bread.

Isabel, Isabel, didn't worry,
Isabel didn't scream or scurry.
She nibbled the zwieback that she always fed off,
And when it was gone, she cut the giant's head off.

Isabel met a troublesome doctor,
He punched and he poked till he really shocked her.
The doctor's talk was of coughs and chills
And the doctor's satchel bulged with pills.
The doctor said unto Isabel,
Swallow this, it will make you well.
Isabel, Isabel, didn't worry,
Isabel didn't scream or scurry.
She took those pills from the pill-concocter,
And Isabel calmly cured the doctor.

MERRILL MOORE

Merrill Moore was born September 11, 1903, in Columbia, Tennessee. He received his B.A. at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, in 1924, and his M.D. in 1928. At Vanderbilt he was a member of the now famous group of poets known as "The Fugitives," but he served his internship in Boston, and now practices there, teaches at the Harvard Medical School, and writes continually for the medical and psychiatric journals.

One of the busiest men of his day, he is also the most prolific writer of sonnets. At thirty-five he had already written more sonnets than any man who ever lived; in 1938 the editor made a rough count of about 40,000, and the total is steadily mounting. Three volumes of these sonnets have appeared: *The Noise That Time Makes* (1929), *Six Sides to a Man* (1935), and *M* (1938), the last, as the title indicates, containing one thousand sonnets!

As a sonneteer, Moore does not adhere to the orthodox form. The rhyme-schemes are haphazard and irregular, the rhythms are uncertain; the stanzas divide themselves arbitrarily. But the ideas are continually fresh, the lines are alert with exact images, the rhythms are based on the rise and fall of the breath. Never has there been a more spontaneous poetry. Moreover, in breaking through the rigidity of the old form, Moore has fashioned a sonnet which is as distinctly American as Petrarch's was Italian. Naturally, in such energetic

quantity, this cannot be a poetry of perfection. But the best of Moore's sonnets are keen in insight, sharp in observation, rich in the tone of conversation, and always surprising in subject and treatment.

HOW SHE RESOLVED TO ACT

"I shall be careful to say nothing at all
About myself or what I know of him
Or the vaguest thought I have — no matter how dim,
Tonight if it so happen that he call."

And not ten minutes later the door-bell rang,
And into the hall he stepped as he always did,
With a face and a bearing that quite poorly hid
His brain that burned and his heart that fairly sang,
And his tongue that wanted to be rid of the truth.

As well as she could, for she was very loath
To signify how she felt, she kept very still,
But soon her heart cracked loud as a coffee mill,
And her brain swung like a comet in the dark,
And her tongue raced like a squirrel in the park.

NO ENVY, JOHN CARTER

Some night, John Carter, you will dream of hands,
Hands that are dead now, or as good as dead,
That you killed, or as good as made them die
Along the road that you have prospered by;
And I will never envy you the dread
With which you must awake then, as you see
Hands stretched towards you, striving, piteously
Stretched, beseeching, grasping at what was taken,

Hands by pain and grievance sorely shaken
And pointed at you while your agents keep
The power you've gained in this and other lands —
Some night, Mr. Carter, you will dream.
But it will not be an untroubled dream,
And, oh, I shall not envy you your sleep.

THE BOOK OF HOW

After the stars were all hung separately out
For mortal eyes to see that care to look,
The one who did it sat down and wrote a book
On how he did it.

It took him about
As long to write the book as to do the deed,
But he said, "It's things like this we mostly need."
And the angels approved but the devils screamed with laughter,
For they knew exactly what would follow after.

For somehow he managed entirely to omit
The most important facts in accomplishing it:

Where he got the ladder to reach the stars;
And how he lighted them, especially Mars;

And what he hung them on when he got them there,
Eternally distant and luminous in the air.

ANSWER

Here are three ways to get your answer to me:
One, loose your pigeons, for they know my roof.
Tie the message to their legs with a tiny band
And they will bring, but will not understand
The words that one who holds herself aloof
Has written on rice paper with black ink;
That is the quickest way to do, I think,
Others I know but none as instantly.

Or tie a ribbon to the white swan's neck,
Red for yes or very blue for no,
They pass by here for water. If they go
Three days unribboned I'll know that you walk
In your rose garden waiting for the fall
To tell me by blowing dead leaves over my wall.

Phyllis McGinley was born in 1905 in Ontario, Oregon, brought up in Colorado, and educated in Utah. After leaving the university at Salt Lake City, she came to New York to teach. She taught English for five years in New Rochelle, worked in an advertising agency, helped to edit *Town and Country*, and moved to a Westchester suburb because she had found a lot of Victorian furniture and wanted a Victorian house to put it in.

She intended to be a serious poet, but she soon discovered that light-verse writers get more butter on their bread. Being unusually fond of butter, Miss McGinley turned more and more to dexterous rhymes and agile verse, but the best of her work has insistently serious implications. Her first volume, *On the Contrary* (1934), was followed by *One More Manhattan* (1937), a more sophisticated and penetrating collection. In the latter, as in the subsequent nimble stanzas which appeared in *The New Yorker*, the tone is deceptive. Mild enough on the surface, it is far from innocuous; a gently smiling manner conceals the teeth, and the slyness hides a satire that bites often and deeply. The technique is part of the wit; it is skillful but seemingly effortless, comic in its twists but always tipped with a critical point.

The following poem is an excellent example of Miss McGinley's gift for balancing herself on the thin line between light verse and serious poetry. A caustic excerpt from a longer and more "occasional" poem is on page 451.

INTIMATIONS OF MORTALITY

(*On Being Told by the Dentist "This will be over soon."*)

Indeed, it will soon be over. I shall be done

With the querulous drill, the forceps, the clove-smelling
cotton.

I can go forth into fresher air, into sun,

This narrow anguish forgotten.

In twenty minutes, or forty, or half an hour,

I shall be easy, and proud of my hard-got gold.

But your apple of comfort is eaten by worms, and sour.

Your consolation is cold.

This will not last, and the day will be pleasant after.

I shall dine tonight with a witty and favorite friend.

No doubt tomorrow I shall rinse my mouth with laughter.
And also that will end.

The handful of time that I am charily granted
Will likewise pass, to oblivion duly apprenticed.
Summer will blossom and autumn be faintly enchanted.
Then time for the grave, or the dentist.

Because you are shrewd, my man, and your hand is clever,
You must not believe your words have a charm to spell me.
There was never a half of an hour that lasted forever.
Be quiet. You need not tell me.

SARA HENDERSON HAY

Sara Henderson Hay was born November 13, 1906, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, but spent her youth in the South. She was educated at Breneau College, in Georgia, and at Columbia University. In 1933 she moved to New York, and supported herself by proof reading, editing, selling rare books, and writing. She married Raymond Holden, the poet, in 1937.

Her first book, *Field of Honor*, won the Kaleidograph Press annual book publication contest for 1933. This and the subsequent verse is a poetry which combines wisdom and whimsicality. It is charming without being prettified, thoughtful without being pretentious. Grace is the dominating note, grace combined with a sly but not malicious wit. "Pigeon English," with its appropriately punning title, is an excellent example of Miss Hay's gift; the reader not only sees the "pompous-bosomed bird" with a new exactness, but hears its very indescribable murmur in the syllables of the last lines of the two verses. "Racing the Rain" is a more serious picture; but here, too, Miss Hay's fancy conjures up an unusual but inevitable image. Another poem, on page 451, shows her quality in a lighter vein.

PIGEON ENGLISH

The plump, the pompous-bosomed bird
Perches upon the steepled roof;
He wears a look of mild reproof

And speaks in accents soft and blurred.
One pessimistic theme is his:
"And the difficulty is . . . and the difficulty is . . ."

His neighbor sits and cocks an eye
Upon the busy street below;
He sees the people come and go,
He feels Time's feathered wing brush by,
Nods his head sagely, and says he,
"Indubitably . . . indubitably . . ."

FOR A CERTAIN ATHEIST

His heart's Jerusalem of doubt
I cannot ask that Thou condone —
But if he cast Thy prophets out,
He flung no stone.

He led them to the city gates,
And bade them bind their sandals on,
And gave them bread and wine and dates
Before he said "Begone!"

RACING THE RAIN

As though there leapt within his brain
The strong-limbed fox that tempts the chase,
Ecstatic terror sets his pace
Who runs, who runs before the rain.

Who feels the strange excitement flood
His pricking senses through and through,
And times his ardent muscles to
A lovely panic in his blood.

But almost fears to look behind,
Lest somewhere, somehow, he should spy
Along the margin of the sky
A lean hound snuffing up the wind.

Hilda Conkling was born at Catskill-on-Hudson, New York, October 8, 1910. The daughter of a poet, Grace Hazard Conkling, she came to Northampton, Massachusetts, with her mother when she was three years old.

Hilda began to write poems — or, rather, to talk them — at the age of four. Many of these were astonishing in exactness of phrase and vision. *Poems by a Little Girl* (1920), published when Hilda was nine years old, is a detailed proof of this originality; "Water," "Hay-Cock," and a dozen others are startling in their power of painting the familiar in unsuspected colors. She hears a chickadee talking:

The way smooth bright pebbles
Drop into water.

The rooster's comb is "gay as a parade"; he has "pearl trinkets on his feet," and:

The short feathers smooth along his back
Are the dark color of wet rocks,
Or the rippled green of ships
When I look at their sides through water.

Shoes of the Wind (1922) proves that Hilda's first volume was no wonder-child's freak. Here again her vision is precise even when her imagination is most playful. She watches pigeons with "feet the color of new June strawberries," she observes a peony standing in a tall glass as "Queen Elizabeth in a ruff," lilies-of-the-valley are "bell-shaped moments clustered, doves of time." This keen choice of epithet makes Hilda kin to the Imagists; Amy Lowell might have described a flight of pigeons in just such words as Hilda's: "A cool curving and sliding down the light."

WATER

The world turns softly
Not to spill its lakes and rivers.
The water is held in its arms
And the sky is held in the water.

What is water,
That pours silver,
And can hold the sky?

HAY-COCK

This is another kind of sweetness
Shaped like a bee-hive:
This is the hive the bees have left,
It is from this clover-heap
They took away the honey
For the other hive!

I KEEP WONDERING

I saw a mountain,
And he was like Wotan looking at himself in the water.
I saw a cockatoo,
And he was like sunset clouds.
Even leaves and little stones
Are different to my eyes sometimes.
I keep wondering through and through my heart
Where all the beautiful things in the world
Come from.
And while I wonder
They go on being beautiful.

NATHALIA CRANE

Nathalia Clara Ruth Crane was born in New York City, August 11, 1913. Through her father she is descended from John and Priscilla Alden; on her mother's side she inherits the gifts of a famous family of Spanish Jews who were poets, musicians, and ministers of state. Nathalia began to write when she was eight years old. At nine she sent some verses to *The New York Sun* and they were accepted wholly on their merit, the poetry editor having no idea that the lines were written by a child.

Nathalia's first volume, *The Janitor's Boy*, appeared when its author was ten and a half, in 1924. It became one of the most discussed publications of the year. Some of the critics explained the work by insisting that Nathalia was some sort of instrument unaware of what was played; others ridiculed the idea that a child could have written verses so smooth in execution and so remarkable in overtones.

Whatever the source may be, the poetry is a firm and definite accomplishment.

The verse itself is of two kinds: the light and genuinely childish jingle, and the incredibly grave and cryptic poetry. Even in the first division there is a quality unusual to child verse; in such merry stanzas as "The Flathouse Roof," there is a sly sophistication. The turn of epigram is never lacking; even in her pattering syllables she speaks of "the tenseness of humiliating pain"; an emotion suspiciously like humor leads her to begin another poem:

I linger on the flathouse roof, the moonlight is divine,
But my heart is all a-flutter like the washing on the line.

The other division of Nathalia's work, which is no longer verse but indisputable poetry, shows that Nathalia has read much not only in books of legends but in the dictionary. This juvenile mystic is as fond of archaic syllables as Francis Thompson (she collected unusual words just as other children collect postage stamps), and she enjoys using a string of glistening alliterations to express some psychic fact.

Lava Lane (1925), *The Singing Crow* (1926), and *Venus Invisible* (1928) are more sedate; these volumes are almost wholly serious, and the growth is obvious. The brilliant images, the uncanny perceptions make the individual lines memorable.

In November, 1927, Nathalia won first prize (\$500) in the contest for the best poem celebrating Lindbergh's flight across the Atlantic. During her attendance at New Jersey College for Women and at Barnard she was kept from publishing, but at twenty-two she assembled another collection of her half-childish, half-pedantic verses, *Swear by the Night* (1936), with a foreword by the editor. In the end one does not care whether the author is a conscious child or an influenced medium; one forgets who may have written the phrases and such condensations as "Destiny" and "The Colors." The appeal of these lines is not that they have been written by a child but by a poet.

THE JANITOR'S BOY

Oh, I'm in love with the janitor's boy,
And the janitor's boy loves me;
He's going to hunt for a desert isle
In our geography.

A desert isle with spicy trees
Somewhere near Sheepshead Bay;

A right nice place, just fit for two,
Where we can live away.

Oh, I'm in love with the janitor's boy,
He's busy as he can be;
And down in the cellar he's making a raft
Out of an old settee.

He'll carry me off, I know that he will,
For his hair is exceedingly red,
And the only thing that occurs to me
Is to dutifully shiver in bed.

The day that we sail, I shall leave this brief note,
For my parents I hate to annoy:
"I have flown away to an isle in the bay
With the janitor's red-haired boy."

GREATNESS

I sing a song of greatness —
The grandeur in a grain;
Of seas that rim the minim,
Of dust that breeds a plain.

Of hope in beetles' bosoms,
Of love of butterflies;
The valor of the thistle
That seeks to down the skies.

I sing a song of greatness —
The mount that holds a horde;
The lord of all the honey,
The dot that draws the sword.

The ardor that deposits
In miniature a churl,
Slips on a coat of nacre
And then parades the pearl.

I sing a song of greatness,
Of loomsters spinning strings,
The ember in the glowworm:
The candle borne by wings.

The banquets served on beeswax,
The locust's home-brewed ale,
And greatness quaffing gallons
In mansions of the snail.

DESTINY

The wind doth wander up and down,
Forever seeking for a crown;
The rose, in stillness on a stem,
Inherits love's own diadem.

THE DUST

Crumpling a pyramid, humbling a rose,
The dust has its reasons wherever it goes.

Treating the sword blade the same as the staff,
Turning the chariot wheel into chaff.

Toppling a pillar and nudging a wall,
Building a sand pile to counter each fall.

Yielding to nothing, not even the rose,
The dust has its reasons wherever it goes.

THE COLORS

You cannot choose your battlefield,
The gods do that for you,
But you can plant a standard
Where a standard never flew.





MODERN BRITISH POETRY

PREFACE

At the outset it should be stated that this gathering of British poetry is not a complete summary. Nor, it should be added, does it pretend to be. The work of the poets in England and Ireland during the last century has been so voluminous, so rich and so varied, that no one volume can be a final anthology. Like the preceding pages devoted to modern American poetry, the following pages presume to give a survey of outstanding forces, to trace the rise of interesting movements and tendencies, and, chiefly, to serve as a critical introduction to the work of the more important poets. It establishes 1830 as a boundary — a deadline by which any poet before that date is automatically excluded — and thus the emphasis throughout is on modern poetry.

THE MODERN BOUNDARY

Eliminating most of the Victorian writers, the reader can devote himself to the sense and spirit of the times. It is a spirit of sudden change, of startling ideas, of rapid reappraisals. Reaction takes the place of reflection. The "genteel tradition" begins to wane; a new vigor comes into the literature, and the elaborate diction, the awkward inversions, the stilted terms are dropped from the language. The large movement toward naturalism divides itself into smaller movements, and these smaller movements may be studied separately. They are: (1) The end of Victorianism, (2) The Pre-Raphaelites, (3) The rise and decline of the esthetic philosophy, (4) The muscular influence of Henley, (5) William Butler Yeats and the Celtic revival in Ireland, (6) Rudyard Kipling and the ascendancy of mechanism in art, (7) John Masefield and the return of the rhymed narrative, (8) The war and its effects upon the Georgians, (9) The literature of

nerves and (10) The post-war group. It may be interesting to follow these developments in somewhat closer detail.

THE END OF VICTORIANISM

The age commonly called Victorian came to an end in England about 1880. It was an age distinguished by many true idealists and many false ideals. It was, in spite of notable artists, on an entirely different level from the epoch preceding. Its poetry was, in the main, not universal but parochial; its romanticism was gilt and tinsel; its realism was kin to the artificial backgrounds, the red plush and antimacassars. The period was full of pessimistic resignation (the note popularized by Fitzgerald's Omar Khayyâm), a negation which, refusing to see any glamour in the present world, turned to the Middle Ages, to King Arthur, to the legend of Troy — to the soft surroundings of a dream-world instead of the hard edges of actual experience.

The poets of a generation before this time were fired with ideas of freedom, an insatiable hunger for truth in all its forms and manifestations. The characteristic poets of the Victorian Era, says Max Plowman, "wrote under the dominance of churchliness, of 'sweetness and light,' and a thousand lesser theories that have not truth but comfort for their end." The revolt against the tawdriness of the period had already begun; the best of Victorianism can be found not in men who were typically Victorian, but in pioneers like Browning, Swinburne, Rossetti, and William Morris, who were completely out of sympathy with their time.

THE PRE-RAPHAELITES: MORRIS TO SWINBURNE

That band of painters and poets who called themselves The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood expedited the end of Victorianism. Under the leadership of William Morris, The Pre-Raphaelites enlisted the coöperation of Burne-Jones, the Rossettis, and Swinburne. Morris, the most practical member of the group, sought to make over an entire culture; he de-

signed everything from chintzes to stained-glass windows, created furniture, wrought iron, printed books, manufactured glass, needlework, tapestries, tools — all as a protest against the commercialism of a period. Morris was a consistent protester in his poetry and his politics. In the rôle of poet he rebuked the smallness of his times with epics like *The Earthly Paradise*; in the rôle of propagandist he answered narrow individualism with *News from Nowhere*.

Swinburne gave poetry a new motion, an orchestral sweep and sonority. "Nor," wrote Edmund Gosse, "was his vogue due only to this extraordinary metrical ingenuity; the effect of his artistic personality was itself intoxicating. He was the poet of youth insurgent against all the restraints of conventionality and custom."

The "purest" poet of the group was one only loosely affiliated with it, the quiet sister of Dante Gabriel, Christina Rossetti. Her delicate reticences have been often portrayed, but it remained for Frances Winwar, in *Poor Splendid Wings: The Rossettis and Their Circle*, to depict the outer softness and the inner sharpness, "protecting, like a coat of armor, something she held above the treasures of the world."

RISE AND DECLINE OF THE ESTHETIC PHILOSOPHY

A further, if more limited, revolt ensued. Oscar Wilde championed an expression whose beauty was "its own excuse for being." Wilde's was, in the most outspoken manner, the first use of estheticism as a slogan; the battle-cry of the group was actually the now outworn but then revolutionary "Art for Art's sake"! And, so sick were people of pinchbeck ornaments that the slogan won. At least, temporarily.

The Yellow Book, the organ of the younger writers, appeared (1894-1897), representing a reasoned if limited reaction. The Rhymers' Club was the nucleus, and its members — among them Ernest Dowson, Lionel Johnson, Arthur Symons, William Butler Yeats — met at the Cheshire Cheese where, over their cakes and ale, they fondly hoped to restore the spirit of the Elizabethan age. Unfortunately they lacked

the gusto of their Mermaid Tavern models. Where the Elizabethans were all for size, the sad young men were all for subtlety; instead of being large and careless, they were small and self-conscious, writing with one eye on the British public which they hoped to startle, and the other on the French poets whom they hoped to impress.

Almost the first act of the "new" men was to rouse and outrage their immediate predecessors. This end-of-the-century desire to shock has a place of its own — especially as an antidote, a harsh corrective. Mid-Victorian propriety and self-satisfaction crumbled under the audacities of the sensational young authors and artists. The old walls fell; the public, once indifferent to *belles lettres*, was more than attentive to every phase of experimentation. The last decade of the nineteenth century was so tolerant of novelty in art and ideas that it would seem, says Holbrook Jackson in his penetrating summary, *The Eighteen-Nineties*, "as though the declining century wished to make amends for several decades of artistic monotony. It may indeed be something more than a coincidence that placed this decade at the close of a century, and *fin de siècle* may have been at once a swan song and a death-bed repentance."

Later on, the movement, surfeited with its own excesses, fell into the mere poses of revolt; it degenerated into a defense not of Art but of Artificiality.

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

Henley repudiated languid estheticism; he scorned an art which was out of touch with the world. His was a large and sweeping affirmation. He felt that mere existence was glorious; life was difficult, often dangerous and dirty, but splendid at the heart. Art, he knew, could not be separated from the dreams and hungers of man; it could not flourish only on its own technical accomplishments. To live, poetry would have to share the fears, hopes, and struggles of the prosaic world. So Henley came like a swift salt breeze blowing through a perfumed and heavily screened studio. He sang loudly (often too loudly) of the joy of living and the courage

of the "unconquerable soul." He was a powerful influence not only as a poet but as a critic and editor. A pioneer and something of a prophet, he was one of the first to champion the writings of Stevenson, the paintings of Whistler, and the genius of the sculptor Rodin.

If at times Henley's verse is imperialistic, over-muscular and strident, his noisy moments are redeemed not only by his delicate lyrics but by his passionate enthusiasm for nobility in whatever cause it was joined.

THE CELTIC REVIVAL AND J. M. SYNGE

In 1889, William Butler Yeats published his *Wanderings of Oisín*; in the same year Douglas Hyde, the scholar and folk-lorist, elected President of the Irish Republic in 1938, brought out his *Book of Gaelic Stories*.

The revival of Gaelic and the renaissance of Irish literature may be said to date from the publication of those two books. The fundamental idea of both men and their followers was the same. It was to create a literature which would express the national consciousness of Ireland through a purely national art. This community of fellowship and aims is to be found in the varied but allied work of William Butler Yeats, "Æ" (George W. Russell), Moira O'Neill, Lionel Johnson, Katharine Tynan, Padraic Colum and others. These writers began to reflect the strange background of dreams, politics, suffering, and heroism that is immortally Irish. The first fervor gone, a short period of dullness set in. After reanimating the old myths with a new significance, it seemed that the movement would lose itself in a literary mysticism. But there followed an increasing concern with the peasant, the migratory laborer, the tramp, an interest that was something of a reaction against the influence of Yeats and his mystic other-worldliness.

In 1904 the Celtic Revival reached its height with John Millington Synge, who was not only the greatest dramatist of the Irish Theatre, but "one of the greatest dramatists who have written in English." Synge's poetry, brusque and all too small in quantity, was a minor occupation with him, yet

the quality and power of it is unmistakable. The raw vigor in it was to serve as a bold banner for the younger men of the following period.

Although Synge's poetry numbered only twenty-four original pieces and eighteen translations, it had a surprising effect. It marked a point of departure, a reaction against the over-rhetorical verse of his immediate predecessors and the dehumanized mysticism of his associates. In a memorable preface to his *Poems* he wrote a *credo* for all that we may call the "new" poetry. "I have often thought," it begins, "that at the side of poetic diction, which everyone condemns, modern verse contains a great deal of poetic material, using 'poetic' in the same special sense. The poetry of exaltation will be always the highest; but when men lose their poetic feeling for ordinary life and cannot write poetry of ordinary things, their exalted poetry is likely to lose its strength of exaltation in the way that men cease to build beautiful churches when they have lost happiness in building shops. . . . Even if we grant that exalted poetry can be kept successfully by itself, the strong things of life are needed in poetry also, to show that what is exalted or tender is not made by feeble blood."

RUDYARD KIPLING

While Synge was publishing his proofs of the poetry in everyday life, Kipling was illuminating, in a totally different manner, the wealth of poetic material in things regarded as too unpoetic for poetry. Before literary England had recovered from its surfeit of Victorian priggishness and pre-Raphaelite delicacy, Kipling came along with a great tide of life, sweeping all before him. An obscure Anglo-Indian journalist, the publication of his *Barrack-room Ballads* in 1892 brought him sudden notice. By 1895 he was internationally famous. Brushing over the pallid attempts to revive a pallid past, he rode triumphantly on a wave of buoyant and sometimes brutal joy in the present. Kipling gloried in the material world; he did more — he glorified it. He pierced the coarse exteriors of seemingly prosaic things — things like

machinery, bridge-building, cockney soldiers, slang, steam, the dirty by-products of science — and uncovered their hidden glamour. "Romance is gone," sighed most of his contemporaries,

"... and all unseen
Romance brought up the nine-fifteen."

That sentence is the key to Kipling's attitude and the idiom which helped rejuvenate English verse.

Kipling, with his perception of ordinary people in terms of ordinary life, was one of the strongest links between the Wordsworth-Browning era and the latest apostles of realism. There are occasional and serious defects in his work. Frequently he falls into a journalistic ease that tends to turn into jingle; he is fond of a militaristic drum-banging. But a burning if sometimes too simple faith shines through his achievement. His best work reveals an intensity that crystallizes into beauty what was tawdry; it lifts the incidental and vulgar to the plane of the universal.

JOHN MASEFIELD

All art is a twofold revivifying — a recreation of subject and a reanimating of form. And poetry becomes perennially "new" by returning to the old with a greater awareness. In 1911, when art was again searching for novelty, John Masefield created something startling and new by going back to 1385 and *The Canterbury Pilgrims!* Employing the Chaucerian model and a form similar to the almost forgotten Byronic stanza, Masefield wrote, in rapid succession, *The Everlasting Mercy* (1911), *The Widow in the Bye Street* (1912), *Dauber* (1912), *The Daffodil Fields* (1913) — four astonishing rhymed narratives and four of the most remarkable poems of his generation. Expressive of the more rugged phases of life, these poems responded to Synge's proclamation that "the strong things of life are needed in poetry also . . . and it may almost be said that before verse can be human again it must be brutal."

Masefield brought back to poetry that mixture of beauty

and brutality which is its human and enduring quality. He brought back that rich animation which is the lifeblood of Chaucer, of Shakespeare, of Burns, of Heine — and of all those who were not only great artists but great humanists. As a purely descriptive poet, he can take his place with the masters of sea and landscape. As an imaginative realist, he showed those who were stumbling from one wild eccentricity to another to thrill them, that they themselves were wilder and far more thrilling than anything in the world — or out of it. Few things in contemporary poetry are as powerful as the regeneration of Saul Kane (in *The Everlasting Mercy*) or the story of *Dauber*, the legend of a dreaming youth who wanted to be a painter. The vigorous description of rounding Cape Horn in the latter poem is superbly done, a masterpiece in itself. Masfield's later volumes are quieter in tone, more measured in technique. But the firm line is there, a strength that leaps through all his work from *Salt Water Ballads* (1902) to *Reynard the Fox* (1919).

THE WAR AND THE GEORGIANS

There is no sharp line of demarcation between Masfield and the realists who succeeded him. W. W. Gibson had already sounded the "return to actuality" by turning from his preoccupation with shining knights, faultless queens, ladies in distress, and all the paraphernalia of hackneyed medieval romances, to write about ferrymen, berry-pickers, stone-cutters, farmers, printers, circus-men, carpenters — dramatizing (though sometimes theatricalizing) the primitive emotions of uncultured and ordinary people.

The first volume of the biennial *Georgian Poetry* had just appeared when the war caught up the youth of England in a great gust of national fervor. Not only the young men but their seniors joined what seemed then to be "the Great Adventure," only to find that it was, as one of them has since called it, "the Great Nightmare." After the early flush of romanticism had passed, the voices of disillusion were heard. Not at first, for the censorship was omnipresent. But Siegfried Sassoon's fierce satires and burning denunciations

could not be stilled, the mocking lines of Robert Graves began to be quoted, and Wilfred Owen's posthumous poems painted a picture the very opposite of the journalistic jingo verses which attempted to depict civilization's greatest blow in bright and heroic colors.

Robert Graves summarized the part which the soldier-poets played. He pointed out that those who celebrated war were either far from the front or saw little actual fighting, that not more than four or five poets saw the war through to the end, that these "unanimously vilified rather than celebrated the war, and of these only Siegfried Sassoon published his verse while the war was still on."

The effect of the war on the older poets was disastrous. With the exception of Yeats, all the poets suffered a loss of faith and force; some of them, like Hodgson and Housman, ceased to write at all. Peace brought back only a few of the younger poets. English literature received a setback on all fronts; the shock affected writers of every school; it diverted where it did not arrest the current of contemporary verse. A false pastoral note crept in. Horrified by the death-dealing machine, many of the poets turned from destructive ingenuities to "primal simplicities." Following the example of that genuinely bucolic poet, W. H. Davies, a small group began to sing exclusively about the charms of childhood, sunsets, lambs, and other rural delights. Walter de la Mare continued to write of experiences beyond reality, of a lost world of curious music and delicate dreams. James Stephens elaborated his odd whimsicalities in an inflection which was a cross between wisdom and banter. Charlotte Mew and Anna Wickham found a new turn to feminism and struck many arresting notes. Humbert Wolfe composed in experimental and dissonant harmonies. But most of the younger men, fearing to be false and hating to be "pretty," turned to an unhappy form of expression — a literature of nerves.

THE LITERATURE OF NERVES

Headed by the three Sitwells (Edith, Osbert, and Sacheverell) a poetry emerged which took the form of satire.

Sometimes the burlesque was broad, but usually the allusions were so private that only a few "insiders" found them intelligible. The Sitwells advertised themselves liberally, bellowed their verses through megaphones, declaimed them against a background of modernistic music, and even capitalized their unpopularity. Although the Sitwells and their followers wrote some interesting lines, most of their work is high-pitched, nervous, exasperated and (as a not unnatural result) exasperating. Too often their art is a kind of personal sport, a game played in code, a sort of intimate charade. The technique is a little too obviously "odd," and the books — many of them written at or to each other — are semi-public affairs.

Such work was bound to cause another revulsion in taste. A new group of poets spoke up against the unreason and aimlessness of the literature of nerves. They revolted — revolted, it seemed, against everything except revolution.

THE POST-WAR POETS

In the early 1930's several poets emerged who had more than mere contemporaneousness in common. Their vocabulary, their taste, their technique, most of all their social and political convictions, were in the greatest possible contrast to those of the Georgians and the Sitwellians. They owed much to the American T. S. Eliot, who so strongly influenced English poetry at the beginning of the twentieth century. Eliot prepared the way for them, celebrating and satirizing the end of a cycle, the cultural decay of a period and a system. But such poets as Stephen Spender, W. H. Auden, and Louis MacNeice refused to follow Eliot's evasions and defeatism. They claimed to be revolutionaries; Eliot was credited with having shown them the way to a new rhythmical freedom, but nothing more. Nevertheless, the poetic art in England received a sudden increase in vitality impelled by a social fervor. It came with such exuberance that even those who challenged its philosophy could not dispute its stimulative force.

EXPERIMENT AND TRADITION

The aim of the following pages is the same as that outlined in the preface to *Modern American Poetry*; these pages act as a complement as well as a contrast to those which precede them. The two parts endeavor to give a double portrait of one branch of the literature of the English-speaking world; they reveal many similarities and even more differences. Generally, it seems true that American poetry is more youthful and experimental, while English poetry is quieter and more traditional.

Yet this conclusion must be accepted only with reservations; recent English poetry has shown many departures. As in America, several of the younger writers have been accused of irreverence, lack of ideals, willfulness, and general unintelligibility. In defense of some of these writers, the critic Alida Monro wrote in 1935: "At no time in the history of man has there been so sudden and violent a change in his environment and circumstance as has taken place in the past twenty-five years. It is far easier, in some ways, to understand the past, even the past of two hundred years ago, than it is to understand our own time, or to try to imagine what life may be like twenty years hence. It is, then, not remarkable that, oppressed by every fresh scientific discovery, with the Great War behind, with the Greater and more horrible War before him, the poet today should be preoccupied with subjects and forms that do not seem to fit into the preconceived notions of what constitutes poetry according to the canons of an age in literature now as dead as the Augustan age."

It is salutary to observe how the course of poetry in Great Britain may have been deflected temporarily in the last hundred years, how it has swung from one tendency toward another, and yet how, for all its bends and twists, it has lost neither strength nor direction.

L. U.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

Christina Georgina Rossetti was born in London, December 5, 1830. Her father was a scholar, a poet, and an exile from Italy; Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the poet and painter, was her oldest brother; thus Christina grew up in an unusually artistic and creative circle. Her friends were members of the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, and, for a while, she was engaged to one of the painters of the "school," though she never married.

Her first appearance was with a little volume, *Verses*, privately printed when she was seventeen, but her most important poems were not published until she was well into her thirties. *Goblin Market* (1862) and *The Prince's Progress and Other Poems* (1866) reveal the simple directness and melodic grace so characteristic of this poet. As she grew older she grew more and more religious; she almost took the veil; she wrote literally hundreds of hymns. She suffered much in private, but she never ceased to write. Her *Collected Poems* contain almost a thousand compositions. In 1892 she was operated upon for cancer; a year later it was evident that the malignant tissue could not be eradicated. She died, at the age of sixty-four, December 29, 1894.

Her verse lives. Although its central philosophy is not that of our day, its simple vocabulary and direct tone set the style for much modern poetry. Many of the women poets who would repudiate Christina Rossetti's humility and "escapism" have adopted her lyric manner and echoed the cry in her love-sonnets. Lizette Woodworth Reese, Sara Teasdale, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and others have learned from her. She luxuriated in emotion and metaphor; she piled up comparisons — "A Birthday" is little more than a chain of unrelated similes — but she employed repetition with skill and her lines are beautifully balanced. Though not one of poetry's great technicians, her best work is so melodious, so restrained and yet so rapturous, so sad yet so serene, that it is a model of its kind.

WHEN I AM DEAD, MY DEAREST

When I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me;
Plant thou no roses at my head,
Nor shady cypress tree:

Be the green grass above me
With showers and dewdrops wet:
And if thou wilt, remember,
And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows,
I shall not see the rain;
I shall not hear the nightingale
Sing on as if in pain:
And dreaming through the twilight
That doth not rise nor set,
Haply I may remember,
And haply may forget.

REMEMBER ME WHEN I AM GONE AWAY

Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day
You tell me of our future that you planned.
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad.

A BIRTHDAY

My heart is like a singing bird
Whose nest is in a watered shoot;
My heart is like an apple-tree
Whose boughs are bent with thickset fruit;

My heart is like a rainbow shell
 That paddles in a halcyon sea; ¹
 My heart is gladder than all these
 Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of silk and down;
 Hang it with vair ² and purple dyes;
 Carve it in doves and pomegranates,
 And peacocks with a hundred eyes;
 Work it in gold and silver grapes,
 In leaves and silver fleurs-de-lys; ³
 Because the birthday of my life
 Is come, my love is come to me.

COME BACK TO ME

Come back to me who wait and watch for you: —
 Or come not yet, for it is over then,
 And long it is before you come again,
 So far between my pleasures are and few.
 While, when you come not, what I do I do,
 Thinking, "Now when he comes," my sweetest "when":
 For one man is my world of all the men
 This wide world holds; O love, my world is you.
 Howbeit, to meet you grows almost a pang
 Because the pang of parting comes so soon;
 My hope hangs waning, waxing, like a moon
 Between the heavenly days on which we meet:
 Ah me, but where are now the songs I sang
 When life was sweet because you called them sweet?

¹ *halcyon sea*: the halcyon was a fabled bird supposed to have the power of charming winds and waves so that it might nest at sea — therefore, a halcyon sea is a calm and peaceful one.

² *vair*: a kind of fur used for decoration.

³ *fleurs-de-lys*: the lily used on the royal arms of France; pronounced *fler-de-lee*.

Algernon Charles Swinburne was born in London, April 5, 1837. The family was an aristocratic one; his father was an admiral in the Queen's Navy; his childhood was spent on the great family estate on the Isle of Wight. Swinburne was a precocious as well as a beautiful child; he read the classics in his boyhood; he won prizes in Italian and French; his first work was published when he was still an undergraduate.

Immediately upon leaving Oxford he published two poetic plays which were phenomenal productions for a youth of twenty-three. With *Poems and Ballads* (1866) Swinburne made a sensation; by the end of his thirtieth year he had achieved a reputation for brilliance greater than that of any poet since Byron. Volume after volume followed; by 1904 he had written more than twenty-five works, and the first collected edition of his plays and poems ran to eleven volumes. In his sixties Swinburne turned to the novel and varied poetry with critical prose; in his early seventies he suffered a sudden attack of pneumonia and died April 10, 1909.

Much of Swinburne's work is over-wordy, even over-musical. At first the reader is swept away by the buoyant syllables and the vigorous rhythms, but, after a while, the reader tires of what seems a wildness of verbiage and an extravagance of rhyme. As Edward Thomas, the poet and critic, wrote in 1912, "he can astonish and melt, but seldom thrill." Even his ideas are too loose to convince; his reliance on a rush of alliteration—a trick which Swinburne himself parodied—becomes a literary device which is annoying when it is not amusing. As Saintshury says, Swinburne too often planned "sea-serpents of verse in order to show how easily and gracefully he could make them coil and uncoil."

At his best Swinburne radiates a quick and generous spirit, a spirit full of a love of political liberty and a faith in the brotherhood of man. His finest moments are in the impetuous lyrics, where he celebrates his love of earth and the sea, headlong lyrics which cannot fail to excite the youth of all ages.

SPRING

(From "*Atalanta in Calydon*")

When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
The mother of months in meadow or plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain;

And the brown bright nightingale amorous
Is half assuaged for Itylus,
For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,
The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

Come with bows bent and with emptying of quivers,
Maiden most perfect, lady of light,
With a noise of winds and many rivers,
With a clamor of waters, and with might;
Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,
Over the splendor and speed of thy feet;
For the faint east quickens, the wan west shivers,
Round the feet of the day and the feet of the night.

Where shall we find her, how shall we sing to her,
Fold our hands round her knees, and cling?
O that man's heart were as fire and could spring to her,
Fire, or the strength of the streams that spring!
For the stars and the winds are unto her
As raiment, as songs of the harp-player;
For the risen stars and the fallen cling to her,
And the southwest-wind and the west-wind sing.

For winter's rains and ruins are over,
And all the season of snows and sins;
The days dividing lover and lover,
The light that loses, the night that wins;
And time remembered is grief forgotten,
And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,
And in green underwood and cover
Blossom by blossom the spring begins. . . .

The ivy falls with the bacchanal's hair
Over her eyebrows hiding her eyes;
The wild vine slipping down leaves bare
Her bright breast shortening into sighs;

The wild vine slips with the weight of its leaves,
But the berried ivy catches and cleaves
To the limbs that glitter, the feet that scare
The wolf that follows, the fawn that flies.

THE SEA

(From "*The Triumph of Time*")

I will go back to the great sweet mother,
Mother and lover of men, the sea.
I will go down to her, I and none other,
Close with her, kiss her and mix her with me;
Cling to her, strive with her, hold her fast;
O fair white mother, in days long past
Born without sister, born without brother,
Set free my soul as thy soul is free.

O fair green-girdled mother of mine,
Sea, that art clothed with the sun and the rain,
Thy sweet hard kisses are strong like wine,
Thy large embraces are keen like pain.
Save me and hide me with all thy waves,
Find me one grave of thy thousand graves,
Those pure cold populous graves of thine,
Wrought without hand in a world without stain.

I shall sleep, and move with the moving ships,
Change as the winds change, veer in the tide;
My lips will feast on the foam of thy lips,
I shall rise with thy rising, with thee subside;
Sleep, and not know if she be, if she were,
Filled full with life to the eyes and hair,
As a rose is fulfilled to the roseleaf tips
With splendid summer and perfume and pride.

This woven raiment of nights and days,
Were it once cast off and unwound from me,
Naked and glad would I walk in thy ways,
Alive and aware of thy ways and thee;

Clear of the whole world, hidden at home,
 Clothed with the green and crowned with the foam,
 A pulse of the life of thy straits and bays,
 A vein in the heart of the streams of the sea. . . .

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Not if men's tongues and angels' all in one
 Spake, might the word be said that might speak Thee.
 Streams, winds, woods, flowers, fields, mountains, yea, the
 sea,
 What power is in them all to praise the sun?
 His praise is this — he can be praised of none.
 Man, woman, child, praise God for him. But he
 Exults not to be worshiped, but to be.
 He is; and, being, beholds his work well done.
 All joy, all glory, all sorrow, all strength, all mirth,
 Are his: without him, day were night on earth.
 Time knows not his from time's own period.
 All lutes, all harps, all viols, all flutes, all lyres,
 Fall dumb before him ere one string suspires.
 All stars are angels; but the sun is God.

THOMAS HARDY

Thomas Hardy was born in the village of Upper Bockhampton, near Dorchester, in Wessex, June 2, 1840. His father was a stonemason, and young Hardy was apprenticed to an architect. He studied in London, won a prize from the Royal Institute of Architects at the age of twenty-three, and, at the age of thirty-one, published the first of his many novels. The book, *Desperate Remedies*, was a failure, and little attention was paid to the writer until the publication of *Under the Greenwood Tree*, in which he mirrored his native Wessex background. Between the ages of thirty-four and fifty-seven Hardy wrote eleven novels and three collections of short stories, most of them somber in tone and adding a note of social criticism to the pictures of men forever struggling in a heedless or hostile world.

At sixty he returned to the writing of poetry — "my first love,"

he wrote to the editor — after devoting more than twenty years to prose, a form he never deeply liked. He said he had been “*compelled* to give up verse for prose” in order to support himself by printing “*potboilers*.” Besides composing hundreds of lyrics, many of them really condensed dramas, he produced the epical *The Dynasts*, a huge drama of the Napoleonic wars in three books, nineteen acts, and one hundred and thirty scenes.

The last half of Hardy's life was spent at Max Gate, a home which he had designed for himself and where he lived in semi-seclusion. (A picture, half-truth and half-caricature, of this period is presented in Somerset Maugham's novel *Cakes and Ale*.) He died in his eighty-eighth year, “the grand old man of English letters,” January 11, 1928. His ashes were placed in Westminster Abbey, but his heart was buried, at his own request, on Egdon Heath, in the churchyard he had made famous and the soil he loved so faithfully.

Hardy's *Collected Poems*, several times revised, and his posthumous *Winter Words in Various Moods* (1929) prove that Hardy's power and his poems increased as he grew older. He wrote in almost every manner and meter. At one moment he is tragically ironic, as in the “*Satires of Circumstance*,” the next moment he is lightly lyrical, as in “*When I Set Out For Lyonesse*,” one of Hardy's own favorites. Although he was often labelled a pessimist, he was a man whose heart bled for the sufferings of humanity and who never lost hope in mankind. Hardy felt that man struggled against vast and unequal odds, but the very futility of his struggle — and his persistence in striving — made him noble. In poetry Hardy's genius for condensation was at its highest; time and again he captured in a single stanza a whole countryside with its people laboring against a quiet but fiercely living landscape.

IN TIME OF “THE BREAKING OF NATIONS”

Only a man harrowing clods
In a slow silent walk,
With an old horse that stumbles and nods
Half asleep as they stalk.

Only thin smoke without flame
From the heaps of couch-grass:
Yet this will go onward the same
Though Dynasties pass.

Yonder a maid and her wight
Come whispering by;
War's annals will fade into night
Ere their story die.

THE DARKLING THRUSH

I leaned upon a coppice gate
When Frost was specter-gray,
And Winter's dregs made desolate
The weakening eye of day.
The tangled vine-stems scored the sky
Like strings from broken lyres,
And all mankind that haunted nigh
Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be
The Century's corpse outleant;
His crypt the cloudy canopy,
The wind his death-lament.
The ancient pulse of germ and birth
Was shrunken hard and dry,
And every spirit upon earth
Seemed fervorless as I.

At once a voice burst forth among
The bleak twigs overhead
In a full-hearted evensong
Of joy unlimited;
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt and small,
In blast-beruffled plume,
Has chosen thus to fling his soul
Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings
Of such ecstatic sound
Was written on terrestrial things
Afar or nigh around,

That I could think there trembled through
His happy good-night air
Some blessed hope, whereof he knew
And I was unaware.

WHEN I SET OUT FOR LYONNESSE

When I set out for Lyonesse,
A hundred miles away,
The rime was on the spray,
And starlight lit my lonesomeness
When I set out for Lyonesse
A hundred miles away.

What could bechance at Lyonesse
While I should sojourn there
No prophet durst declare,
Nor did the wisest wizard guess
What would bechance at Lyonesse
While I should sojourn there.

When I came back from Lyonesse
With magic in my eyes,
All marked with mute surmise
My radiance rare and fathomless,
When I came back from Lyonesse
With magic in my eyes.

A SATIRE OF CIRCUMSTANCE

"I stood at the back of the shop, my dear,
But you did not perceive me.
Well, when they deliver what you were shown
I shall know nothing of it, believe me!"

And he coughed and coughed as she paled and said,
"O, I didn't see you come in there —
Why couldn't you speak?" — "Well, I didn't. I left
That you should not notice I'd been there.

"You were viewing some lovely things. '*Soon required
For a widow, of latest fashion*';
And I knew 'twould upset you to meet the man
Who had to be cold and ashen

"And screwed in a box before they could dress you
'*In the last new note in mourning,*'
As they defined it. So, not to distress you,
I left you to your adorning."

THE PROSPECT

The twigs of the birch imprint the December sky
Like branching veins upon a thin old hand;
I think of summer-time, yes, of last July,
When she was beneath them, greeting a gathered band
Of the urban and bland.

Iced airs wheeze through the skeletoned hedge from the
north,
With steady snores, and a numbing that threatens snow,
And skaters pass; and merry boys go forth
To look for slides. But well, well do I know
Whither I would go!

WAITING BOTH

A star looks down at me,
And says: "Here I and you
Stand, each in our degree:
What do you mean to do —
Mean to do?"

I say: "For all I know,
Wait, and let Time go by,
Till my change come." — "Just so,"
The star says: "So mean I —
So mean I."

(Henry) Austin Dobson was born at Plymouth, in 1840, and was educated in Wales and on the Continent. In 1856, he received a clerkship in the government and was in official life most of his life.

Vignettes in Rhyme (1873) attracted attention by the ease with which the author managed his dexterous and difficult effects. With *Proverbs in Porcelain* (1877) and *At the Sign of the Lyre* (1885), it was evident that a new master of *vers de société* had arisen.

During the latter part of his life, Dobson devoted himself to semi-biographical essays, intended to immortalize some nearly or wholly forgotten celebrity. His prose is scarcely less distinctive than his verse; his charmingly dispensed knowledge of the time of Queen Anne gives a special flavor of "archaic gentility."

Although most of his rhymes are charming rather than profound, certain pages, like "Before Sedan," are memorable for their serious clarity. Dobson died September 3, 1921.

IN AFTER DAYS

In after days when grasses high
O'ertop the stone where I shall lie,
Though ill or well the world adjust
My slender claim to honored dust,
I shall not question or reply.

I shall not see the morning sky;
I shall not hear the night-wind's sigh;
I shall be mute, as all men must
In after days!

But yet, now living, fain were I
That someone then should testify,
Saying — "He held his pen in trust
To Art, not serving shame or lust."
Will none? — Then let my memory die
In after days!

BEFORE SEDAN

"The dead hand clasped a letter."

— Special Correspondence.

Here in this leafy place
Quiet he lies,
Cold with his sightless face
Turned to the skies;
'Tis but another dead;
All you can say is said.

Carry his body hence, —
Kings must have slaves;
Kings climb to eminence
Over men's graves:
So this man's eye is dim; —
Throw the earth over him.

What was the white you touched,
There, at his side?
Paper his hand had clutched
Tight ere he died; —
Message or wish, may be;
Smooth the folds out and see.

Hardly the worst of us
Here could have smiled!
Only the tremulous
Words of a child;
Prattle, that has for stops
Just a few ruddy drops.

Look. She is sad to miss,
Morning and night,
His — her dead father's — kiss;
Tries to be bright,
Good to mamma, and sweet.
That is all. "Marguerite."

Ah, if beside the dead
 Slumbered the pain!
Ah, if the hearts that bled
 Slept with the slain!
If the grief died; — but no.
Death will not have it so.

ANDREW LANG

Andrew Lang, critic and essayist, was born in 1844 and educated at Balliol College, Oxford. Besides his many well-known translations of Homer, Theocritus, and the Greek Anthology, he published numerous biographical works.

As a poet, his chief claim rests on his nimble and melodious verse. *Ballads and Lyrics of Old France* (1872), *Ballades in Blue China* (1880), and *Rhymes à la Mode* (1884) disclose Lang as a lesser Austin Dobson. His death occurred July 20, 1912.

SCYTHE SONG

Mowers, weary and brown and blithe,
 What is the word, methinks, ye know,
Endless over-word that the Scythe
 Sings to the blades of the grass below?
Scythes that swing in the grass and clover,
 Something, still, they say as they pass;
What is the word that, over and over,
 Sings the Scythe to the flowers and grass?

*Hush, ah, hush, the Scythes are saying,
 Hush, and heed not, and fall asleep;
Hush they say to the grasses swaying;
 Hush they sing to the clover deep!
Hush — 'tis the lullaby Time is singing —
 Hush and heed not, for all things pass;
Hush, ah, hush! and the Scythes are swinging
 Over the clover, over the grass!*

Robert (Seymour) Bridges was born in 1844 and educated at Eton and Corpus Christi College, Oxford. He studied medicine in London and practiced until 1882. Most of his poems, like his occasional plays, are classical in tone as well as treatment. He was appointed poet laureate in 1913, following Alfred Austin. His command of the secrets of rhythm, especially exemplified in *Shorter Poems* (1894), gives his lines a subtle but firm delicacy of pattern.

Bridges' *Poetical Works*, excluding his dramas, appeared in 1913, but it was not until Bridges was eighty-five that *The Testament of Beauty* was published. This lengthy philosophical poem was acclaimed by critics who had neglected or belittled the poet. Although many readers found the work diffuse and difficult, it was conceded to be his major effort, and *The Testament of Beauty* was ranked above anything that Bridges had hitherto composed. He died, after a short illness, April 21, 1930.

WINTER NIGHTFALL

The day begins to droop —
Its course is done:
But nothing tells the place
Of the setting sun.

The hazy darkness deepens,
And up the lane
You may hear, but cannot see,
The homing wain.

An engine pants and hums
In the farm hard by:
Its lowering smoke is lost
In the lowering sky.

The soaking branches drip,
And all night through
The dropping will not cease
In the avenue.

A tall man there in the house
Must keep his chair:
He knows he will never again
Breathe the spring air:

His heart is worn with work;
He is giddy and sick
If he rise to go as far
As the nearest rick:

He thinks of his morn of life,
His hale, strong years;
And braves as he may the night
Of darkness and tears.

ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY

Arthur (William Edgar) O'Shaughnessy, was born in London in 1844, and was connected, for a while, with the British Museum. His first literary success, *Epic of Women* (1870), promised a splendid future for the young poet, a promise strengthened by his *Music and Moonlight* (1874). Always delicate in health, his hopes were dashed by periods of illness. He met an early death in London in 1881.

The poem here reprinted, like all of O'Shaughnessy's, owes much to its editor. The "Ode," which has become one of the classics of the age, originally had seven verses, the last four being mere versifying. When Palgrave compiled his *Golden Treasury*, he recognized the great difference between the first three inspired stanzas and the others — and calmly and courageously dropped the final four.

William Alexander Percy recently performed a similar service for this singer who, nine-tenths of the time, was an undistinguished minor poet. Many liberties are taken in *Poems of Arthur O'Shaughnessy* (1922), but the omissions are all justifiable.

ODE

We are the music-makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
And sitting by desolate streams;

World-losers and world-forsakers,
On whom the pale moon gleams:
Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world forever, it seems.

With wonderful deathless ditties
We built up the world's great cities,
And out of a fabulous story
We fashion an empire's glory:
One man with a dream, at pleasure,
Shall go forth and conquer a crown;
And three with a new song's measure
Can trample an empire down.

We, in the ages lying
In the buried past of the earth,
Built Nineveh with our sighing,
And Babel itself with our mirth;
And o'erthrew them with prophesying
To the old of the new world's worth;
For each age is a dream that is dying,
Or one that is coming to birth.

ALICE MEYNELL

Alice (Christina Thompson) Meynell was born in 1849, was educated privately by her father and spent a great part of her early life in Italy. She married Wilfrid Meynell, the friend, editor, and literary executor of Francis Thompson. Her daughter, Viola Meynell, is a poet and novelist; her son, Francis Meynell, is the distinguished printer and publisher. Both were the subjects of poems by Francis Thompson.

Alice Meynell's work, which is high in conception and fine in execution, is distinguished by its pensive, religious note. Her first four volumes appeared, in a condensed form, in *Collected Poems* (1913). Her most representative work is *A Father of Women and Other Poems* (1917) and *Selected Poems* (1931), which show her fastidious taste and touch. She died in 1923.

NOVEMBER BLUE

The golden tint of the electric lights seems to give a complementary color to the air in the early evening. — Essay on London.

O heavenly color, London town
Has blurred it from her skies;
And, hooded in an earthly brown,
Unheaven'd the city lies.
No longer, standard-like, this hue
Above the broad road flies;
Nor does the narrow street the blue
Wear, slender pennon-wise.

But when the gold and silver lamps
Color the London dew,
And, misted by the winter damps,
The shops shine bright, anew —
Blue comes to earth, it walks the street,
It dyes the wide air through;
A mimic sky about their feet
The throng go crowned with blue.

CHIMES

Brief, on a flying night
From the shaken tower,
A flock of bells take flight,
And go with the hour.

Like birds from the cote to the gales,
Abrupt — O hark!
A fleet of bells set sails,
And go to the dark.

Sudden the cold airs swing,
Alone, aloud,
A verse of bells takes wing
And flies with the cloud.

RENOUNCEMENT

I must not think of thee; and, tired yet strong,
 I shun the thought that lurks in all delight —
 The thought of thee — and in the blue Heaven's height,
 And in the dearest passage of a song.
 Oh, just beyond the fairest thoughts that throng
 This breast, the thought of thee waits, hidden yet bright;
 But it must never, never come in sight;
 I must stop short of thee the whole day long.

But when sleep comes to close each difficult day,
 When night gives pause to the long watch I keep,
 And all my bonds I needs must loose apart,
 Must doff my will as raiment laid away —
 With the first dream that comes with the first sleep
 I run, I run, I am gathered to thy heart.

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

William Ernest Henley was born August 23, 1849, and was educated at Gloucester. From childhood he was afflicted with a tuberculous disease which finally necessitated the amputation of a foot. His *Hospital Verses*, those vivid forerunners of free verse, are a record of the time when he was at the infirmary at Edinburgh; they are sharp with the sights, sensations, even the actual smells of the sick-room. In spite (or, more probably, because) of his continued poor health, Henley never ceased to worship strength and energy; courage and a triumphant belief in a harsh world shine out of the athletic *London Voluntaries* (1892) and the lightest and most musical lyrics in *Hawthorn and Lavender* (1898). In contrast to his free verse Henley wrote many poems in the strict French forms, of which the rondeau, "What Is to Come," is an excellent example.

After a brilliant and varied career, devoted mostly to journalism, Henley died in 1903.

INVICTUS

Out of the night that covers me,
 Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
 I thank whatever gods may be
 For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

THE BLACKBIRD

The nightingale has a lyre of gold,
The lark's is a clarion call,
And the blackbird plays but a boxwood flute,
But I love him best of all.

For his song is all of the joy of life,
And we in the mad, spring weather,
We two have listened till he sang
Our hearts and lips together.

MARGARITÆ SORORI

A late lark twitters from the quiet skies;
And from the west,
Where the sun, his day's work ended,
Lingers as in content,
There falls on the old, gray city
An influence luminous and serene,
A shining peace.
The smoke ascends
In a rosy-and-golden haze. The spires
Shine, and are changed. In the valley

Shadows rise. The lark sings on. The sun,
Closing his benediction,
Sinks, and the darkening air
Thrills with a sense of the triumphing night —
Night with her train of stars
And her great gift of sleep.

So be my passing!
My task accomplished and the long day done,
My wages taken, and in my heart
Some late lark singing,
Let me be gathered to the quiet west,
The sundown splendid and serene,
Death.

WHAT IS TO COME

What is to come we know not. But we know
That what has been was good; was good to show,
Better to hide, and best of all to bear.
We are the masters of the days that were:
We have lived, we have loved, we have suffered. Even so.

Shall we not take the ebb who had the flow?
Life was our friend. Now if it be our foe —
Dear, though it spoil and break us! — need we care
What is to come?

Let the great winds their worst and wildest blow,
Or the gold weather round us mellow slow;
We have fulfilled ourselves, and we can dare
And we can conquer, though we may not share
In the rich quiet of the afterglow
What is to come.

Robert Louis Stevenson was born at Edinburgh in 1850. He was trained to be a lighthouse engineer, following the profession of his family. However, he studied law instead, was admitted to the bar in 1875, and abandoned law for literature a few years later. His poor health made him leave England; he lived, at various times, in Switzerland and the United States, and finally settled in the South Seas, where he died, in Samoa, in 1894.

Primarily a novelist, Stevenson has left one immortal book of poetry which is equally at home in the nursery and the library: *A Child's Garden of Verses* (first published in 1885) is second only to Mother Goose's own collection in its lyrical simplicity and universal appeal. *Underwoods* (1887) and *Ballads* (1890) complete his entire poetic output. As a genial essayist, Stevenson is not unworthy to be ranked with Lamb. As a romancer, his fame rests on *Kidnapped*, the unfinished *Weir of Hermiston*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and that eternal classic of youth, *Treasure Island*.

ROMANCE

I will make you brooches and toys for your delight
Of bird-song at morning and star-shine at night.
I will make a palace fit for you and me,
Of green days in forests and blue days at sea.

I will make my kitchen, and you shall keep your room,
Where white flows the river and bright blows the broom,
And you shall wash your linen and keep your body white
In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.

And this shall be for music when no one else is near,
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear!
That only I remember, that only you admire,
Of the broad road that stretches and the roadside fire.

REQUIEM

Under the wide and starry sky
Dig the grave and let me lie:
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you 'grave for me:
Here he lies where he long'd to be;
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

GO, LITTLE BOOK

Go, little book, and wish to all
 Flowers in the garden, meat in the hall,
 A bin of wine, a spice of wit,
 A house with lawns enclosing it,
 A living river by the door,
 A nightingale in the sycamore.

OSCAR WILDE

Oscar Wilde was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1856. As an undergraduate at Oxford he was marked for a brilliant career; when he was twenty-one he won the Newdigate Prize with his poem *Ravenna*.

Giving himself almost entirely to prose, Wilde became known as a writer of brilliant epigrammatic essays and even more brilliant paradoxical plays. His slippancies were quoted everywhere; his fame as a wit was only surpassed by his notoriety as a professional æsthete.

Most of his "poems in prose" (such as *The Birthday of the Infanta* and *The Fisherman and His Soul*) are more imaginative and richly colored than his verse; but in one long poem, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* (1898), he sounded his deepest, simplest, and most enduring note. Prison was, in many ways, a regeneration for Wilde. It not only produced *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* but made possible his most poignant piece of writing, *De Profundis*, only a part of which has been published.

Wilde died at Paris, an unhappy exile, November 30, 1900.

REQUIESCAT

Tread lightly, she is near
 Under the snow,
 Speak gently, she can hear
 The daisies grow.

All her bright golden hair
Tarnished with rust,
She that was young and fair
Fallen to dust.

Lily-like, white as snow,
She hardly knew
She was a woman, so
Sweetly she grew.

Coffin-board, heavy stone,
Lie on her breast;
I vex my heart alone,
She is at rest.

Peace, peace; she cannot hear
Lyric or sonnet;
All my life's buried here,
Heap earth upon it.

FRANCIS THOMPSON

Born in 1857 at Ashton, Lancashire, Francis Thompson was educated at Owen's College, Manchester. He tried all manner of ways of earning a living. He was, at various times, assistant in a boot-shop, medical student, collector for a bookseller, and homeless vagabond; there was a period in his life when he sold matches on the streets of London. He was discovered in terrible poverty, ill with tuberculosis and suffering from the effects of opium, by Wilfrid Meynell, the editor of a magazine to which he had sent some verses.

Supported and befriended by Wilfrid and Alice Meynell, he broke off his opium habits (although he never regained complete health) and started to write with renewed energy. Almost immediately thereafter he became famous. His exalted mysticism is seen at its purest in "A Fallen Yew" and "The Hound of Heaven." Coventry Patmore, the distinguished poet of an earlier period, says of the latter poem (unfortunately too long to quote in this collection), "It is one of the very few *great* odes of which our language can boast."

Sister Songs appeared in 1895, *New Poems* in 1897. His prose, containing the famous essay on Shelley, was not collected until many years later. He was never anyone but himself; a mystic unaware of any world but the world within us, as much enraptured by strange colors, curious words (he delighted in the ring of archaic syllables) and quaint symbols as a child.

Thompson died in November, 1907. Various collected editions of his poems were issued shortly after his death; an inexpensive *Complete Poetical Works* can be found in The Modern Library. His poetry, like the snowflake which he celebrated in one of his most characteristic poems, was "insculped and embossed," pure and frail, but "fashioned surely."

"Daisy" and the selection from "Ode to the Setting Sun" display Thompson's word-coloring as well as his characteristic contrasts.

TO A SNOWFLAKE

What heart could have thought you? —
Past our devisal
(O filigree petal!)
Fashioned so purely,
Fragilely, surely,
From what Paradisal
Imagineless metal,
Too costly for cost?
Who hammered you, wrought you,
From argentine vapor? —
"God was my shaper.
Passing surmised,
He hammered, He wrought me,
From curled silver vapor,
To lust of his mind: —
Thou couldst not have thought me!
So purely, so palely,
Tinily, surely,
Mightily, frailly,
Insculped and embossed,
With His hammer of wind,
And His graver of frost."

DAISY

Where the thistle lifts a purple crown
Six foot out of the turf,
And the harebell shakes on the windy hill —
O breath of the distant surf! —

The hills look over on the South,
And southward dreams the sea;
And with the sea-breeze hand in hand
Came innocence and she.

Where 'mid the gorse the raspberry
Red for the gatherer springs;
Two children did we stray and talk
Wise, idle, childish things.

She listened with big-lipped surprise,
Breast-deep 'mid flower and spine:
Her skin was like a grape whose veins
Run snow instead of wine.

She knew not those sweet words she spake,
Nor knew her own sweet way;
But there's never a bird, so sweet a song
Thronged in whose throat all day.

Oh, there were flowers in Storrington
On the turf and on the spray;
But the sweetest flower on Sussex hills
Was the Daisy-flower that day!

Her beauty smoothed earth's furrowed face.
She gave me tokens three: —
A look, a word of her winsome mouth,
And a wild raspberry.

A berry red, a guileless look,
A still word, — strings of sand!
And yet they made my wild, wild heart
Fly down to her little hand.

For standing artless as the air,
And candid as the skies,
She took the berries with her hand,
And the love with her sweet eyes.

The fairest things have fleetest end,
Their scent survives their close:
But the rose's scent is bitterness
To him that loved the rose.

She looked a little wistfully,
Then went her sunshine way: —
The sea's eye had a mist on it,
And the leaves fell from the day.

She went her unremembering way,
She went and left in me
The pang of all the partings gone,
And partings yet to be.

She left me marvelling why my soul
Was sad that she was glad;
At all the sadness in the sweet,
The sweetness in the sad.

Still, still I seem to see her, still
Look up with soft replies,
And take the berries with her hand,
And the love with her lovely eyes.

Nothing begins, and nothing ends,
That is not paid with moan,
For we are born in other's pain,
And perish in our own.

FROM "ODE TO THE SETTING SUN"

How came the entombèd tree a light-bearer,
 Though sunk in lightless lair?
 Friend of the forgers of earth,
 Mate of the earthquake and thunders volcanic,
 Clapsed in the arms of the forces Titanic
 Which rock like a cradle the girth
 Of the ether-hung world;
 Swart son of the swarthy mine,
 When flame on the breath of his nostrils feeds
 How is his countenance half-divine,
 Like thee in thy sanguine weeds?
 Thou gavest him his light,
 Though sepultured in night
 Beneath the dead bones of a perished world;
 Over his prostrate form
 Though cold, and heat, and storm,
 The mountainous wrack of a creation hurled.

Who made the splendid rose
 Saturate with purple glows;
 Cupped to the marge with beauty; a perfume-press
 Whence the wind vintages
 Gushes of warmèd fragrance richer far
 Than all the flavorful ooze of Cyprus' vats? ¹
 Lo, in yon gale which waves her green cymar,²
 With dusky cheeks burnt red
 She sways her heavy head,
 Drunk with the must of her own odorousness;
 While in a moted trouble the vexed gnats
 Maze, and vibrate, and tease the noontide hush.
 Who girt dissolvèd lightnings in the grape?
 Summered the opal with an Irised flush?
 Is it not thou that dost the tulip drape,
 And huest the daffodilly,
 Yet who hast snowed the lily,

¹ The famous scented wine of Cyprus. ² cymar: a loose robe.

And her frail sister, whom the waters name,
 Dost vestal-vesture 'mid the blaze of June,
 Cold as the new-sprung girlhood of the moon
 Ere Autumn's kiss sultry her cheek with flame?
 Thou sway'st thy sceptred beam
 O'er all delight and dream,
 Beauty is beautiful but in thy glance:
 And like a jocund maid
 In garland flowers arrayed,
 Before thy ark Earth keeps her sacred dance.

A. E. HOUSMAN

Alfred Edward Housman was born in Worcestershire, March 26, 1859, and, after a classical education, was, for ten years, a Higher Division Clerk in H. M. Patent Office. Later in life, he became a teacher, one of the leading authorities on the Latin poets and dramatists whose crisp utterance he himself surpassed.

Housman's first book, *A Shropshire Lad* (1896), is known wherever modern English poetry is read. Underneath its ironies, there is a rustic humor that has many subtle variations. From a melodic standpoint, *A Shropshire Lad* is a collection of exquisite and memorable songs. After a silence of twenty-six years, a second volume, significantly entitled *Last Poems*, appeared in 1922. Here, once more, we have the note of pessimism sung in a jaunty rhythm and an incongruously jolly key. The Shropshire lad lives again to pipe his mournful tunes of betrayal, lovesick lads, deserted girls, and suicides with an enviable simplicity and a flawless command of his instrument.

Housman refused to collect his prose, but in 1933 he printed *The Name and Nature of Poetry*, a teasing and thought-provoking lecture which he delivered at Cambridge. He was planning a third small collection of poems when he died, May 1, 1936. This third collection, *More Poems* (1936), contained a short preface by his brother Laurence Housman and was followed by a memoir. *More Poems* is the Shropshire lad's farewell to the world. The three thin books actually form one volume. When the three are printed as one book it will be recognized that no contemporary artist was more fastidious and less sentimental, more self-analytical and yet more expressive of the unquestioning countryside, more unassailable in lyric perfection.

REVEILLÉ

Wake! The silver dusk returning
Up the beach of darkness brims,
And the ship of sunrise burning
Strands upon the eastern rims.

Wake! The vaulted shadow shatters,
Trampled to the floor it spanned,
And the tent of night in tatters
Straws the sky-pavilioned land.

Up, lad! Up! 'Tis late for lying:
Hear the drums of morning play;
Hark, the empty highways crying
"Who'll beyond the hills away?"

Towns and countries woo together;
Forelands beacon, belfries call;
Never lad that trod on leather
Lived to feast his heart with all.

Up, lad! Thews that lie and cumber
Sunlit pallets never thrive;
Morns abed and daylight slumber
Were not meant for man alive.

Clay lies still, but blood's a rover;
Breath's a ware that will not keep.
Up, lad! When the journey's over
There'll be time enough to sleep.

SAY, LAD, HAVE YOU THINGS TO DO

Say, lad, have you things to do?
Quick then, while your day's at prime.
Quick, and if 'tis work for two,
Here am I, man: now's your time.

Send me now, and I shall go;
Call me, I shall hear you call;
Use me ere they lay me low
Where a man's no use at all;

Ere the wholesome flesh decay,
And the willing nerve be numb,
And the lips lack breath to say,
"No, my lad, I cannot come."

THE CARPENTER'S SON

"Here the hangman stops his cart:
Now the best of friends must part.
Fare you well, for ill fare I:
Live, lads, and I will die.

"Oh, at home had I but stayed
'Prenticed to my father's trade,
Had I stuck to plane and adze,
I had not been lost, my lads.

"Then I might have built perhaps
Gallows-trees for other chaps,
Never dangled on my own,
Had I but left ill alone.

"Now, you see, they hang me high,
And the people passing by
Stop to shake their fists and curse;
So 'tis come from ill to worse.

"Here hang I, and right and left
Two poor fellows hang for theft;
All the same's the luck we prove,
Though the midmost hangs for love.

"Comrades all, that stand and gaze,
Walk henceforth in other ways;

See my neck and save your own:
Comrades all, leave ill alone.

"Make some day a decent end,
Shrewder fellows than your friend.
Fare you well, for ill fare I:
Live, lads, and I will die."

FROM FAR, FROM EVE AND MORNING

From far, from eve and morning
And yon twelve-winded sky,
The stuff of life to knit me
Blew hither: here am I.

Now — for a breath I tarry
Nor yet disperse apart —
Take my hand quick and tell me,
What have you in your heart.

Speak now, and I will answer;
How shall I help you, say;
Ere to the wind's twelve quarters
I take my endless way.

LOVELIEST OF TREES

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.

ON THE IDLE HILL OF SUMMER

On the idle hill of summer,
Sleepy with the flow of streams,
Far I hear the steady drummer
Drumming like a noise in dreams.

Far and near and low and louder
On the roads of earth go by,
Dear to friends and food for powder,
Soldiers marching, all to die.

East and west on fields forgotten
Bleach the bones of comrades slain,
Lovely lads, all dead and rotten;
None that go return again.

Far the calling bugles hollo,
High the screaming fife replies,
Gay the files of scarlet follow:
Woman bore me, I will rise.

TO AN ATHLETE DYING YOUNG

The time you won your town the race
We chaired you through the market-place;
Man and boy stood cheering by,
And home we brought you shoulder-high.

Today, the road all runners come,
Shoulder-high we bring you home,
And set you at your threshold down,
Townsmen of a stiller town.

Smart lad, to slip betimes away
From fields where glory does not stay,
And early though the laurel grows,
It withers quicker than the rose.

Eyes the shady night has shut
Cannot see the record cut,
And silence sounds no worse than cheers
After earth has stopped the ears:

Now you will not swell the rout
Of lads that wore their honors out,
Runners whom renown outran
And the name died before the man.

So set, before its echoes fade,
The fleet foot on the sill of shade,
And hold to the low lintel up
The still-defended challenge-cup.

And round that early-laureled head
Will flock to gaze the strengthless dead,
And find unwithered on its curls
The garland briefer than a girl's.

WHEN I WAS ONE-AND-TWENTY

When I was one-and-twenty
I heard a wise man say,
"Give crowns and pounds and guineas
But not your heart away;
Give pearls away and rubies
But keep your fancy free."
But I was one-and-twenty,
No use to talk to me.

When I was one-and-twenty
I heard him say again,

"The heart out of the bosom
 Was never given in vain;
 'Tis paid with sighs a-plenty
 And sold for endless rue."
 And I am two-and-twenty,
 And oh, 'tis true, 'tis true.

ARTHUR SYMONS

Arthur Symons was born in Wales in 1865 and began imitating the French Symbolist writers in his youth. His early volumes of poetry — notably *Days and Nights* (1889) and *London Nights* (1895) — are artificial in tone but unusually fine in technique.

The best of Symons' poems have a rare delicacy of touch; they breathe an intimacy in which the sophistication is definite but restrained. His various collections of essays and stories reflect the same blend of intellectuality and romanticism that one finds in his better poems.

His collected *Poems* (1907) appeared in two volumes; *The Fool of the World* (1907) and *Tragedies* (1916) followed. They show various influences, but less dependence on literature than the preceding volumes. It is interesting to compare the poet's longing for the quiet countryside in Symons' "In the Wood of Finvara" with Yeats's "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" on page 310.

IN THE WOOD OF FINVARA

I have grown tired of sorrow and human tears;
 Life is a dream in the night, a fear among fears,
 A naked runner lost in a storm of spears.

I have grown tired of rapture and love's desire;
 Love is a flaming heart, and its flames aspire
 Till they cloud the soul in the smoke of a windy fire.

I would wash the dust of the world in a soft green flood;
 Here between sea and sea, in the fairy wood,
 I have found a delicate, wave-green solitude.

Here, in the fairy wood, between sea and sea,
I have heard the song of a fairy bird in a tree,
And the peace that is not in the world has flown to me.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

William Butler Yeats was born in Sandymount, near Dublin, in 1865, was educated in England and his native Ireland, studied art abroad, made his home at intervals in Paris and on the Italian Riviera, but always returned to the country of which he was so vital a recorder. He attained prominence not only as poet and dramatist, but as journalist and politician. He helped establish the Irish National Theatre and served the Irish Free State as senator. He was one of the leaders in the Celtic revival, a patriot in the widest sense. Thus he is one of the few men in literature who have not only made the nation's laws, but also its songs. He died January 28, 1939.

Mosada (1886), a poem of which less than 100 copies were printed, was Yeats's first work, but it was not until *The Land of Heart's Desire*, (1894) that Yeats became identified with the national movement. His *Plays for an Irish Theatre* contain some of the most characteristic romantic writing of the period, symbolic, spiritual, yet simple and natural.

The same combination of simplicity and symbolism is evident in the early poems. Apart from the exquisite music and haunting phrases, the lines have a flavor utterly unlike that achieved by any of Yeats's contemporaries. For sheer charm the verses in the early *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1899) are among his most popular.

In the later poetry Yeats's tone is more sinewy, even more severe. The poet no longer deals with shadowy waters and mystical Gaelic gods, but with the actualities of the present. With this change, the images are more direct and the poet uses a stripped rather than an embroidered speech. His *Collected Poems*, revised several times, show the increasing sharpness of the poet's mind. But even in the most rigorous lines Yeats never sacrifices music; the work of his seventies is more arresting than the work of his youth. Just before his sixtieth year Yeats was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, for his colorful and "consistently emotional" poetry.

Yeats has pictured himself and discussed his aims and theories in more detail than have most poets. His two rich books of autobiography were republished in one comprehensive volume in 1938, an indispensable source-book for students.

THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles¹ made;
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping
slow,
' Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket
sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements gray,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

AN OLD SONG RESUNG

Down by the salley gardens my love and I did meet;
She passed the salley gardens with little snow-white feet.
She bid me take love easy, as the leaves grow on the tree;
But I, being young and foolish, with her would not agree.

In a field by the river my love and I did stand,
And on my leaning shoulder she laid her snow-white hand.
She bid me take life easy, as the grass grows on the weirs;
But I was young and foolish, and now am full of tears.

THE SONG OF THE OLD MOTHER

I rise in the dawn, and I kneel and blow
Till the seed of the fire flicker and glow.
And then I must scrub, and bake, and sweep,
Till stars are beginning to blink and peep;

¹ *wattles*: woven twigs or stalks holding the clay together.

But the young lie long and dream in their bed
Of the matching of ribbons, the blue and the red,
And their day goes over in idleness,
And they sigh if the wind but lift up a tress.
While I must work, because I am old
And the seed of the fire gets feeble and cold.

WHEN YOU ARE OLD

When you are old and gray and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace,
And loved your beauty with love false or true;
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face.

And bending down beside the glowing bars
Murmur, a little sadly, how love fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

AEDH WISHES FOR THE CLOTHS OF HEAVEN

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,
Enwrought with golden and silver light,
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
Of night and light and the half-light,
I would spread the cloths under your feet:
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

THE BALLAD OF FATHER GILLIGAN

The old priest Peter Gilligan
Was weary night and day;

For half his flock were in their beds,
Or under green sods lay.

Once, while he nodded on a chair,
At the moth-hour of eve,
Another poor man sent for him,
And he began to grieve.

"I have no rest, nor joy, nor peace,
"For people die and die";
And after cried he, "God forgive!
"My body spake, not I."

He knelt, and leaning on the chair
He prayed and fell asleep;
And the moth-hour went from the fields,
And stars began to peep.

They slowly into millions grew,
And leaves shook in the wind;
And God covered the world with shade,
And whispered to mankind.

Upon the time of sparrow chirp
When the moths came once more,
The old priest Peter Gilligan
Stood upright on the floor.

"Mavrone, mavrone! the man has died,
"While I slept on the chair";
He roused his horse out of its sleep
And rode with little care.

He rode now as he never rode,
By rocky lane and fen;
The sick man's wife opened the door;
"Father! You come again!"

"And is the poor man dead?" he cried.

"He died an hour ago."

The old priest Peter Gilligan
In grief swayed to and fro.

"When you were gone, he turned and died

"As merry as a bird."

The old priest Peter Gilligan
He knelt him at that word.

"He who hath made the night of stars

"For souls, who tire and bleed,

"Sent one of His great angels down

"To help me in my need.

"He who is wrapped in purple robes,

"With planets in His care,

"Had pity on the least of things

"Asleep upon a chair."

RUDYARD KIPLING

Rudyard Kipling was born December 30, 1865, in Bombay, India, of English parents, and was educated in England. In youth he returned to India, where he took a position on the *Lahore Civil and Military Gazette*. He wrote some of his most famous short tales for that paper, many of them collected in *Soldiers Three* and *Plain Tales from the Hills*. His experiences in India also formed the background for the more sensitive stories, *Under the Deodars* and *The Phantom 'Rikshaw*, as well as his famous *Departmental Ditties* and *Barrack-Room Ballads*, which won him recognition as a poet.

In 1892 Kipling married an American, Carolyn Balestier, and came to Vermont. It appears that Kipling intended to make America his permanent home, but he quarreled violently with his brother-in-law, was aggravated into going into court, and finally was driven away. Except for a short visit to New York, Kipling stayed away from the States, and the facts were not revealed until almost forty years later when, in 1937, a neighbor of Balestier's published *Rudyard Kipling's Vermont Feud*. Nevertheless, Kipling collaborated with his American brother-in-law on a novel, *The Naulahka*, and it

was in Vermont that he wrote the immortal *Jungle Books* and the *Just-So Stories*.

Kipling returned to England, isolated himself in a Sussex village, was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1907, and died January 17, 1936. Upon his death he was praised throughout the world for such masterpieces as *Kim* and for the ballads which entitle him to be known as a "people's poet."

Considered solely as a poet, Kipling is one of the most vital figures of the period. He combines the world of the worker and the world of the dreamer; the spirit of romance surges under his realities. His brisk lines communicate the tang of a countryside, the tingle of salt spray, the rough sentiment of unsentimental nature, the snapping of a banner, the untutored, unbroken spirit of common man. Yet it is not merely realism which makes Kipling popular. What attracts the average reader to this poetry is the author's attitude to everyday existence. At a time when others sang of perfumed lilies and idyllic leisure, Kipling celebrated difficulties, duty, hard labor; where others attempted to evoke Greek gods and literary figures, Kipling hailed bridge-builders, engineers, soldiers, sweating stokers, sea-captains — all those who not only existed in the world of work but exulted in the job.

The best of Kipling's verse, hearty and, in the best sense, wholesome, is in the comprehensive *Poems: Inclusive Edition*, an indispensable part of any library.

GUNGA DIN

You may talk o' gin an' beer
When you're quartered safe out 'ere,
An' you're sent to penny-fights an' Aldershot it;
But when it comes to slaughter
You will do your work on water,
An' you'll lick the bloomin' boots of 'im that's got it.
Now in Injia's sunny clime,
Where I used to spend my time
A-servin' of 'Er Majesty the Queen,
Of all them black-faced crew
The finest man I knew
Was our regimental *bhisti*,¹ Gunga Din.

¹ The *bhisti*, or water-carrier, attached to regiments in India, is often one of the most devoted of the Queen's servants. He is also appreciated by the men.

It was "Din! Din! Din!
 You limping lump o' brick-dust, Gunga Din!
 Hi! *slippy hitherao!*¹
 Water, get it! *Panee lao!*²
 You squidgy-nosed old idol, Gunga Din!"

The uniform 'e wore
 Was nothin' much before,
 An' rather less than 'arf o' that be'ind,
 For a twisty piece o' rag
 An' a goatskin water-bag
 Was all the field-equipment 'e could find.
 When the sweatin' troop-train lay
 In a sidin' through the day,
 Where the 'eat would make your bloomin' eyebrows crawl,
 We shouted "*Harry By!*"³
 Till our throats were brick-dry,
 Then we wopped 'im 'cause 'e couldn't serve us all.

It was "Din! Din! Din!
 You 'eathen, where the mischief 'ave you been?
 You put some *juldee*⁴ in it,
 Or I'll *marrow*⁵ you this minute,
 If you don't fill up my helmet, Gunga Din!"

'E would dot an' carry one
 Till the longest day was done,
 An' 'e didn't seem to know the use o' fear.
 If we charged or broke or cut,
 You could bet your bloomin' nut,
 'E'd be waitin' fifty paces right flank rear.
 With 'is *mussick*⁶ on 'is back,
 'E would skip with our attack,
 An' watch us till the bugles made "Retire."

¹ Hurry up!

² Bring water swiftly.

³ Tommy Atkins' equivalent for "O Brother!"

⁴ Speed.

⁵ Hit you.

⁶ Water-skin.

An' for all 'is dirty 'ide,
'E was white, clear white, inside
When 'e went to tend the wounded under fire!

It was "Din! Din! Din!"
With the bullets kickin' dust-spots on the green.
When the cartridges ran out,
You could 'ear the front-files shout:
"Hi! ammunition-mules an' Gunga Din!"

I sha'n't forgit the night
When I dropped be'ind the fight
With a bullet where my belt-plate should 'a' been.
I was chokin' mad with thirst,
An' the man that spied me first
Was our good old grinnin', gruntin' Gunga Din.
'E lifted up my 'ead,
An' 'e plugged me where I bled,
An' 'e guv me 'arf-a-pint o' water — green;
It was crawlin' an' it stunk,
But of all the drinks I've drunk,
I'm gratefulest to one from Gunga Din.

It was "Din! Din! Din!"
'Ere's a beggar with a bullet through 'is spleen;
'E's chawin' up the ground an' 'e's kickin' all around:
For Gawd's sake, git the water, Gunga Din!"

'E carried me away
To where a *dooli*¹ lay,
An' a bullet come an' drilled the beggar clean.
'E put me safe inside,
An' just before 'e died:
"I 'ope you liked your drink," sez Gunga Din.
So I'll meet 'im later on
In the place where 'e is gone —

¹ Stretcher.

Where it's always double drill and no canteen;
'E'll be squattin' on the coals
Givin' drink to pore damned souls,
An' I'll get a swig in Hell from Gunga Din!

Din! Din! Din!
You Lazarushian-leather Gunga Din!
Tho' I've belted you an' flayed you,
By the livin' Gawd that made you,
You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din!

THE RETURN

Peace is declared, and I return
To 'Ackneystadt, but not the same;
Things 'ave transpired which made me learn
The size and meanin' of the game.
I did no more than others did,
I don't know where the change began;
I started as an average kid,
I finished as a thinkin' man.

*If England was what England seems
An' not the England of our dreams,
But only putty, brass, an' paint,
'Ow quick we'd drop 'er! But she ain't!*

Before my gappin' mouth could speak
I 'eard it in my comrade's tone;
I saw it on my neighbor's cheek
Before I felt it flush my own.
An' last it come to me — not pride,
Nor yet conceit, but on the 'ole
(If such a term may be applied),
The makin's of a bloomin' soul.

Rivers at night that cluck an' jeer,
Plains which the moonshine turns to sea,

Mountains that never let you near,
An' stars to all eternity;
An' the quick-breathin' dark that fills
The 'ollows of the wilderness,
When the wind worries through the 'ills —
These may 'ave taught me more or less.

Towns without people, ten times took,
An' ten times left an' burned at last;
An' starvin' dogs that come to look
For owners when a column passed;
An' quiet, 'omesick talks between
Men, met by night, you never knew
Until — 'is face — by shellfire seen —
Once — an' struck off. They taught me, too.

The day's lay-out — the mornin' sun
Beneath your 'at-brim as you sight;
The dinner-'ush from noon till one,
An' the full roar that lasts till night;
An' the pore dead that look so old
An' was so young an hour ago,
An' legs tied down before they're cold —
These are the things which make you know.

Also Time runnin' into years —
A thousand Places left be'ind —
An' men from both two 'emispheres
Discussin' things of every kind;
So much more near than I 'ad known,
So much more great than I 'ad guessed —
An' me, like all the rest, alone —
But reachin' out to all the rest!

So 'ath it come to me — not pride,
Nor yet conceit, but on the 'ole
(If such a term may be applied),
The makin's of a bloomin' soul.

But now, discharged, I fall away
 To do with little things again. . . .
 Gawd, 'oo knows all I cannot say,
 Look after me in Thamesfontein!

*If England was what England seems
 An' not the England of our dreams,
 But only putty, brass, an' paint,
 'Ow quick we'd chuck 'er! But she ain't!*

DANNY DEEVER

"What are the bugles blowin' for?" said Files-on-Parade.
 "To turn you out, to turn you out," the Color-Sergeant said.
 "What makes you look so white, so white?" said Files-on-Parade.

"I'm dreadin' what I've got to watch," the Color-Sergeant said.

"For they're hangin' Danny Deever, you can 'ear the Dead March play,

The regiment's in 'ollow square — they're hangin' him to-day;

They've taken of his buttons off an' cut his stripes away,
 An' they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'."

"What makes the rear-rank breathe so 'ard?" said Files-on-Parade.

"It's bitter cold, it's bitter cold," the Color-Sergeant said.

"What makes that front-rank man fall down?" says Files-on-Parade.

"A touch of sun, a touch of sun," the Color-Sergeant said.

"They are hangin' Danny Deever, they are marchin' of 'im round.

They 'ave 'altd Danny Deever by 'is coffin on the ground:
 An 'e'll swing in 'arf a minute for a sneakin' shootin' hound —

O they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'!"

"'Is cot was right-'and cot to mine," said Files-on-Parade.
 "'E's sleepin' out an' far tonight," the Color-Sergeant said.
 "I've drunk 'is beer a score o' times," said Files-on-Parade.
 "'E's drinkin' bitter beer alone," the Color-Sergeant said.
 "They are hangin' Danny Deever, you must mark 'im to 'is
 place,
 For 'e shot a comrade sleepin' — you must look 'im in the
 face;
 Nine 'undred of 'is county an' the regiment's disgrace,
 While they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'."

"What's that so black agin the sun?" said Files-on-Parade.
 "It's Danny fightin' 'ard for life," the Color-Sergeant said.
 "What's that that whimpers over'ead?" said Files-on-Parade.
 "It's Danny's soul that's passin' now," the Color-Sergeant
 said.
 "For they're done with Danny Deever, you can 'ear the
 quickstep play,
 The regiment's in column, an' they're marchin' us away;
 Ho! the young recruits are shakin', an' they'll want their
 beer today,
 After hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'."

"TOMMY"

I went into a public-'ouse to get a pint o' beer,
 The publican 'e up an' sez, "We serve no redcoats here."
 The girls be'ind the bar they laughed an' giggled fit to die,
 I outs into the street again, an' to myself sez I:
 O, it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy go
 away";
 But it's "Thank you, Mister Atkins," when the band
 begins to play,
 The band begins to play, my boys, the band begins to
 play,
 O, it's "Thank you, Mister Atkins," when the band be-
 gins to play.

I went into a theater as sober as could be,
 They give a drunk civilian room, but 'adn't none for me;
 They sent me to the gallery or round the music-'alls,
 But when it comes to fightin', Lord! they'll shove me in the stalls.¹

For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy
 wait outside";

But it's "Special train for Atkins," when the troop-
 er's on the tide,

The troopship's on the tide, my boys, etc.

O, makin' mock o' uniforms that guard you while you sleep
 Is cheaper than them uniforms, an' they're starvation cheap;
 An' hustlin' drunken sodgers when they're goin' large a bit
 Is five times better business than paradin' in full kit.

Then it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy,
 'ow's yer soul?"

But it's "Thin red line of 'eroes" when the drums be-
 gin to roll,

The drums begin to roll, my boys, etc.

We aren't no thin red 'eroes, nor we aren't no blackguards
 too,

But single men in barricks, most remarkable like you;

An' if sometimes our conduct isn't all your fancy paints,

Why, single men in barricks don't grow into plaster saints.

While it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy
 fall be'ind";

But it's "Please to walk in front, sir," when there's
 trouble in the wind,

There's trouble in the wind, my boys, etc.

You talk o' better food for us, an' schools, an' fires, an' all:
 We'll wait for extry rations if you treat us rational.

Don't mess about the cook-room slops, but prove it to our
 face,

The Widow's² uniform is not the soldier-man's disgrace.

¹ stalls: best places for the show.

² Queen Victoria was often referred to as "The Widow."

For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' " Chuck him
out, the brute! "
But it's " Savior of 'is country " where the guns begin
to shoot;
An' it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' anything
you please;
An' Tommy ain't a bloomin' fool — you bet that
Tommy sees!

AN ASTROLOGER'S SONG

To the Heavens above us
O look and behold
The Planets that love us
All harnessed in gold!
What chariots, what horses
Against us shall bide
While the Stars in their courses
Do fight on our side?

All thoughts, all desires,
That are under the sun,
Are one with their fires,
As we also are one:
All matter, all spirit,
All fashion, all frame,
Receive and inherit
Their strength from the same.

(Oh, man that deniest
All power save thine own,
Their power in the highest
Is mightily shown.
Not less in the lowest
That power is made clear.
Oh, man, if thou knowest,
What treasure is here!)

Earth quakes in her throes
And we wonder for why!
But the blind planet knows
When her ruler is nigh;
And, attuned since Creation
To perfect accord,
She thrills in her station
And yearns to her Lord.

The waters have risen,
The springs are unbound —
The floods break their prison,
And ravin¹ around.
No rampart withstands 'em,
Their fury will last,
Till the Sign that commands 'em
Sinks low or swings past.

Through abysses unproven
And gulfs beyond thought,
Our portion is woven,
Our burden is brought.
Yet They that prepare it,
Whose Nature we share,
Make us who must bear it
Well able to bear.

Though terrors o'ertake us
We'll not be afraid.
No power can unmake us,
Save that which has made.
Nor yet beyond reason
Or hope shall we fall —
All things have their season,
And Mercy crowns all!

¹ *ravin*: seize things violently.

Then, doubt not, ye fearful —
The Eternal is King —
Up, heart, and be cheerful,
And lustily sing:
What chariots, what horses
Against us shall bide
While the Stars in their courses
Do fight on our side?

RECESSIONAL ¹

God of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle-line,
Beneath whose awful hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine —
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies;
The captains and the kings depart:
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

Far-called, our navies melt away;
On dune and headland sinks the fire:
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe,

¹ The recessional is a hymn sung toward the end of a church service. This hymn, written during the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, took courage to publish when poets and politicians alike were celebrating the "deathless glory" of the British Empire.

Such boastings as the Gentiles use,
 Or lesser breeds without the Law —
 Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
 Lest we forget — lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
 In reeking tube and iron shard,¹
 All valiant dust that builds on dust,
 And guarding, calls not Thee to guard,
 For frantic boast and foolish word —
 Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord!

L'ENVOI ²

What is the moral? Who rides may read.
 When the night is thick and the tracks are blind
 A friend at a pinch is a friend indeed;
 But a fool to wait for the laggard behind;
 Down to Gehenna or up to the Throne
 He travels the fastest who travels alone.

White hands cling to the tightened rein,
 Slipping the spur from the booted heel,
 Tenderest voices cry, "Turn again."
 Red lips tarnish the scabbarded steel,
 High hopes faint on a warm hearthstone —
 He travels the fastest who travels alone.

One may fall but he falls by himself —
 Falls by himself with himself to blame;
 One may attain and to him is the pelf,
 Loot of the city in Gold or Fame:
 Plunder of earth shall be all his own:
 He travels the fastest who travels alone.

¹ *reeking tube and iron shard*: smoking guns and bursting bomb-shells.

² *L'Envoi*: Last words or "message."

Ernest Dowson was born at Belmont Hill in Kent, August 2, 1867. His great-uncle was Alfred Domett (Browning's "Waring"), who was at one time Prime Minister of New Zealand. Dowson, practically an invalid all his life, hid himself in miserable surroundings; for almost two years he lived in sordid supper-houses known as "cabmen's shelters." He literally drank himself to death in 1900.

His delicate and fantastic poetry was an attempt to escape from a reality too brutal for him. His passionate lyric, "I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion," a triumph of despair and disillusion, is an outburst in which Dowson epitomized himself, but the two shorter poems quoted below are equally characteristic.

TO ONE IN BEDLAM

With delicate, mad hands, behind his sordid bars,
Surely he hath his posies, which they tear and twine;
Those scentless wisps of straw that, miserable, line
His strait, caged universe, whereat the dull world stares.

Pedant and pitiful. O, how his rapt gaze wars
With their stupidity! Know they what dreams divine
Lift his long, laughing reveries like enchanted wine,
And make his melancholy germane to the stars'?

O lamentable brother! if those pity thee,
Am I not fain of all thy lone eyes promise me;
Half a fool's kingdom, far from men who sow and reap,
All their days, vanity? Better than mortal flowers,
Thy moon-kissed roses seem: better than love or sleep,
The star-crowned solitude of thine oblivious hours!

ENVOY

They are not long, the weeping and the laughter,
Love and desire and hate;
I think they have no portion in us after
We pass the gate.

They are not long, the days of wine and roses:
Out of a misty dream
Our path emerges for a while, then closes
Within a dream.

“Æ”

George William Russell was born April 10, 1867, in the little town of Lurgan, in the north of Ireland. He intended to become a painter, moved to Dublin, formed a close friendship with William Butler Yeats and James Stephens, and was one of those who instigated the Irish revival. He wrote articles for the papers, using the diphthong “Æ” as his pen name. Like Yeats he became active in Irish politics, and spent much of his time establishing co-operative societies and editing local journals. He was particularly interested in poetry, painting, and farming.

The best of his work is in *Collected Poems* (1914) from which there emanates a mystical breath of earth. Yeats has spoken of these poems as “revealing a kind of scented flame consuming them from within.”

After Russell's death, which occurred July 17, 1935, critics united to praise his aims if not all his poetry. His contemporaries considered him one of the noblest spirits of his day, one who believed not only in the immortality of man but in man's present dignity, and one who labored to improve the lot of humanity. Two illuminating books appeared in 1938: *The Living Torch*, a selection of his prose articles, edited by Monk Gibbon, and *A Memoir of “Æ”* by John Eglington.

CONTINUITY

No sign is made while empires pass,
The flowers and stars are still His care,
The constellations hid in grass,
The golden miracles in air.

Life in an instant will be rent,
Where death is glittering blind and wild—
The Heavenly Brooding is intent
To that last instant on Its child.

It breathes the glow in brain and heart,
Life is made magical. Until
Body and spirit are apart,
The Everlasting works Its will.

In that wild orchid that your feet
In their next falling shall destroy,
Minute and passionate and sweet
The Mighty Master holds His joy.

Though the crushed jewels droop and fade,
The Artist's labors will not cease,
And of the ruins shall be made
Some yet more lovely masterpiece.

THE UNKNOWN GOD

Far up the dim twilight fluttered
Moth-wings of vapor and flame:
The lights danced over the mountains,
Star after star they came.

The lights grew thicker unheeded,
For silent and still were we;
Our hearts were drunk with a beauty
Our eyes could never see.

ANTHONY C. DEANE

Anthony C. Deane was born in 1870 and was the Seatonian prizeman in 1905 at Clare College, Cambridge. He has been Vicar of All Saints, Ennismore Gardens, since 1916. His long list of light verse and essays includes many excellent parodies; the most delightful are in his *New Rhymes for Old* (1901), a volume that deserves to be better known.

THE BALLAD OF THE BILLYCOCK

It was the good ship *Billycock*, with thirteen men aboard,
Athirst to grapple with their country's foes, —
A crew, 'twill be admitted, not numerically fitted
To navigate a battleship in prose.

It was the good ship *Billycock* put out from Plymouth Sound,
While lustily the gallant heroes cheered,
And all the air was ringing with the merry bo'sun's singing,
Till in the gloom of night she disappeared.

But when the morning broke on her, behold, a dozen ships,
A dozen ships of France around her lay,
(Or, if that isn't plenty, I will gladly make it twenty),
And hemmed her close in Salamander Bay.

Then to the Lord High Admiral there spake a cabin-boy:
"Methinks," he said, "the odds are somewhat great,
And, in the present crisis, a cabin-boy's advice is
That you and France had better arbitrate!"

"Pooh!" said the Lord High Admiral, and slapped his
manly chest,
"Pooh! That would be both cowardly and wrong;
Shall I, a gallant fighter, give the needy ballad-writer
No suitable material for song?"

"Nay — is the shorthand-writer here? — I tell you, one and
all,
I mean to do my duty, as I ought;
With eager satisfaction let us clear the decks for action
And fight the craven Frenchmen!" So they fought.

And (after several stanzas which as yet are incomplete,
Describing all the fight in epic style)
When the *Billycock* was going, she'd a dozen prizes towing
(Or twenty, as above) in single file!

Ah, long in glowing English hearts the story will remain,
The memory of that historic day,
And, while we rule the ocean, we will picture with emotion
The *Billycock* in Salamander Bay!

P.S. I've lately noticed that the critics — who, I think,
In praising my productions are remiss —
Quite easily are captured, and profess themselves enraptured,
By patriotic ditties such as this,

For making which you merely take some dauntless English-
men,
Guns, heroism, slaughter, and a fleet —
Ingredients you mingle in a meter with a jingle,
And there you have your masterpiece complete!

Why, then, with labor infinite, produce a book of verse
To languish on the "All for Twopence" shelf?
The ballad bold and breezy comes particularly easy —
I mean to take to writing it myself!

CHARLOTTE MEW

Charlotte (Mary) Mew was born in London in 1870, the daughter of an architect who died when she was still a child. Brought up in poverty, obscurity, and struggle, her life was complicated by a long illness which finally overcame her. She was extremely self-critical, published little, and destroyed a great quantity of her work before she died March 24, 1928.

She published only one book during her lifetime — *The Farmer's Bride* (1916) reissued, with eleven poems added, in America as *Saturday Market* (1921) — yet that volume contains some of the finest poetry of the period. Thomas Hardy considered her the best woman poet of her time and other poets added their tributes during her life. She did not exploit her emotion, she scarcely exhibited it; one might say that she distilled emotion and kept it in a secret vial. Her shorter lyrics are simple and intense; her longer work is in dramatic narratives and poignant monologs such as the powerful meditation "Madeleine in Church."

A posthumous volume, *The Rambling Sailor* (1929), like the preceding collection, is full of a speech which is noble and moving, profound but never pompous; each poem is a triumph of condensation.

SEA LOVE

Tide be runnin' the great world over:

'Twas only last June month I mind that we
Was thinkin' the toss and the call in the breast of the lover
So everlastin' as the sea.

Heer's the same little fishes that sputter and swim,

Wi' the moon's old glim on the gray, wet sand;

An' him no more to me nor me to him

Than the wind goin' over my hand.

AGAIN

One day, not here, you will find a hand

Stretched out to you as you walk down some heavenly street;

You will see a stranger scarred from head to feet;

But when he speaks to you you will not understand,

Nor yet who wounded him nor why his wounds are sweet.

And saying nothing, letting go his hand,

You will leave him in the heavenly street —

So we shall meet!

BESIDE THE BED

Someone has shut the shining eyes, straightened and folded

The wandering hands quietly covering the unquiet breast:

So, smoothed and silenced you lie, like a child, not again to
be questioned or scolded;

But, for you, not one of us believes that this is rest.

Not so to close the windows down can cloud and deaden

The blue beyond: or to screen the wavering flame subdue
its breath:

Why, if I lay my cheek to your cheek, your gray lips, like
dawn, would quiver and redden,

Breaking into the old, odd smile at this fraud of death.

Because all night you have not turned to us or spoken,

It is time for you to wake; your dreams were never very
deep:

I, for one, have seen the thin, bright, twisted threads of them
dimmed suddenly and broken.

This is only a most piteous pretense of sleep!

W. H. DAVIES

William Henry Davies was born April 20, 1870, in Monmouthshire of poor Welsh parents. Apprenticed to various trades, he ran away and became a wanderer; he was, until the dramatist Bernard Shaw discovered him, a cattleman, a day-laborer, a berry-picker, a pan-handler — a "super-tramp," as he described himself. At the age of thirty-four he began to write poetry. In a preface to Davies' *The Autobiography of a Super-Tramp*, Shaw describes how he happened to see the poems:

"In 1905 I received a volume of poems by one William H. Davies, whose address was The Farm House, Kennington. The author, as far as I could guess, had walked into a printer's or stationer's shop; handed in his manuscript; and ordered his book as he might have ordered a pair of boots. It was marked 'price, half a crown.' An accompanying letter asked me very civilly if I required a half-crown book of verses; and if so, would I please send the author the half crown: if not, would I return the book. This was attractively simple and sensible. I opened the book, and was more puzzled than ever; before I had read three lines I perceived that the author was a real poet. His work was not in the least strenuous or modern; there was indeed no sign of his ever having read anything otherwise than as a child reads."

It is this seeming childlikeness, this artlessness, which distinguishes the poems of Davies. He writes of cows and lambs, birds and butterflies as though he had never seen them before — as though no one had even heard of them before. Untouched by current fashions in verse, he continues to compose songs which are strangely simple and spontaneous, songs which remind the reader of a more casual Blake.

In Davies' *Collected Poems* (revised four times since their first publication in 1916) good and bad are uncritically mingled. Davies

has written too much and too hastily — more than twenty volumes of poems were published between 1907 and 1938 — and the poet has never had sufficiently severe standards to separate the genuine vision from the uninspired statement. But his quaint touch is unmistakable and, at its best, is unforgettable. If the world is not as innocent and lovely as Davies makes it seem, he almost persuades us it should be.

THE HOUR OF MAGIC

This is the hour of magic, when the Moon
With her bright wand has charmed the tallest tree
To stand stone-still with all his million leaves!
I feel around me things I cannot see;
I hold my breath, as Nature holds her own.
And do the mice and birds, the horse and cow,
Sleepless in this deep silence, so intense,
Believe a miracle has happened now,
And wait to hear a sound they'll recognize,
To prove they still have life with earthly ties?

THE VILLAIN

While joy gave clouds the light of stars,
That beamed where'er they looked;
And calves and lambs had tottering knees,
Excited, while they sucked;
While every bird enjoyed his song,
Without one thought of harm or wrong —
I turned my head and saw the wind,
Not far from where I stood,
Dragging the corn by her golden hair,
Into a dark and lonely wood.

THE MOON

Thy beauty haunts me heart and soul,
O thou fair Moon, so close and bright;
Thy beauty makes me like the child
That cries aloud to own thy light:

The little child that lifts each arm
To press thee to her bosom warm.

Though there are birds that sing this night
With thy white beams across their throats,
Let my deep silence speak for me
More than for them their sweetest notes:
Who worships thee till music fails
Is greater than thy nightingales.

DAYS TOO SHORT

When primroses are out in Spring,
And small, blue violets come between;
When merry birds sing on boughs green,
And rills, as soon as born, must sing;

When butterflies will make side-leaps,
As though escaped from Nature's hand
Ere perfect quite; and bees will stand
Upon their heads in fragrant deeps;

When small clouds are so silvery white
Each seems a broken rimmèd moon —
When such things are, this world too soon,
For me, doth wear the veil of Night.

THE WHITE CASCADE

What happy mortal sees that mountain now,
The white cascade that's shining on its brow?

The white cascade that's both a bird and star,
That has a ten-mile voice and shines so far?

Though I may never leave this land again,
Yet every spring my mind must cross the main

To hear and see that water-bird and star
That on the mountain sings, and shines so far.

A GREETING

Good morning, Life — and all
Things glad and beautiful.
My pockets nothing hold;
But he that owns the gold,
The Sun, is my great friend —
His spending has no end.

Hail to the morning sky,
Which bright clouds measure high;
Hail to you birds whose throats
Would number leaves by notes;
Hail to you shady bowers,
And you green fields of flowers.

Hail to you women fair,
That make a show so rare
In cloth as white as milk —
Be't calico or silk:
Good morning, Life — and all
Things glad and beautiful.

HILAIRE BELLOC

Joseph Hilaire Pierre Belloc was born in 1870 near Paris, France. Four of his great-uncles were generals under Napoleon; his father was a French lawyer; his mother, an Englishwoman, was prominent in the feminist movement which secured votes for women. Belloc was brought up in Sussex, married a Californian, became a naturalized Englishman in 1903. As an eminent Roman Catholic he was made a Knight Commander of the Order of St. Gregory; as a politician he was a Liberal Member of Parliament; as a writer he was controversial and provocative.

Although Belloc has written in every form and on almost every subject — at sixty-seven he had published about one hundred volumes — he began with poetry. From the early *Verses and Sonnets*

(1896) to his latest biography Belloc pursued a tempestuous career with vigor and versatility, grimly ironic and, as in *The Bad Child's Book of Beasts* and *Cautionary Tales for Children* (1908), delightfully nonsensical. An added example of his wit is shown in the epigram on page 449. "Tarantella" echoes the lively pace of the folk-dance which gives the poem its name, and the quickly shifting rhythms are emphasized by the rapid internal rhymes, reminiscent of the castanets and tambourines which accompany the measures.

TARANTELLA

Do you remember an Inn,
 Miranda?
Do you remember an Inn?
And the treading and the spreading
Of the straw for a bedding,
And the fleas that tease in the High Pyrenees,
And the wine that tasted of the tar?
And the cheers and the jeers of the young muleteers
(Under the vine of the dark veranda)?
Do you remember an Inn, Miranda,
Do you remember an Inn?
And the cheers and the jeers of the young muleteers
Who hadn't got a penny,
And who weren't paying any,
And the hammer at the doors and the din?
And the *hip! hop! hap!*
Of the clap
Of the hands to the twirl and the swirl
Of the girl gone chancing,
Glancing,
Dancing,
Backing and advancing,
Snapping of the clapper to the spin
Out and in —
And the *ting, tong, tang* of the guitar!
Do you remember an Inn,
 Miranda?
Do you remember an Inn?

Never more,
 Miranda,
Never more.
Only the high peaks hoar:
And Aragon a torrent at the door.
No sound
In the walls of the halls where falls
The tread
Of the feet of the dead to the ground.
No sound:
But the boom
Of the far waterfall like doom.

EPITAPH ON THE POLITICIAN

Here richly, with ridiculous display,
The Politician's corpse was laid away.
While all of his acquaintance sneered and slanged
I wept: for I had longed to see him hanged.

J. M. SYNGE

John Millington Synge was born at Rathfarnham, near Dublin, in 1871. As a child in Wicklow, he was already fascinated by the strange idioms and the rhythmic speech he heard there, a native utterance which was to be rich material for his work.

For some time, Synge's career was uncertain. He went to Germany, half intending to become a professional musician. There he studied the theory of music, perfecting himself meanwhile in Gaelic and Hebrew. Yeats found him in France and advised him to go to the Aran Islands, to live there as if he were one of the people. "Express a life," said Yeats, "that has never found expression."

The result of this close contact was four of the greatest poetic prose dramas not only of Synge's own generation, but of several generations preceding it. In *Riders to the Sea* (1903), *The Well of the Saints* (1905), and *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907) there is a richness of imagery, a new language startling in its vigor, a wildness and passion that contrast strangely with the mysticism and spirituality of his associates in the Irish Theatre. The same earthiness

is manifest in his *Poems and Translations* (1910), issued a year after his death and subsequently reprinted in the Random House one-volume *Complete Works of J. M. Synge* (1936).

Synge died after an operation March 24, 1909.

PRELUDE

Still south I went and west and south again,
Through Wicklow from the morning till the night,
And far from cities and the sights of men,
Lived with the sunshine and the moon's delight.

I knew the stars, the flowers, and the birds,
The gray and wintry sides of many glens,
And did but half remember human words,
In converse with the mountains, moors and fens.

A TRANSLATION FROM PETRARCH

(He is Jealous of the Heavens and the Earth)

What a grudge I am bearing the earth that has its arms
about her, and is holding that face away from me, where
I was finding peace from great sadness.

What a grudge I am bearing the Heavens that are after
taking her, and shutting her in with greediness, the Heavens
that do push their bolts against so many.

What a grudge I am bearing the blessed saints that have
got her sweet company, that I am always seeking; and what
a grudge I am bearing against Death, that is standing in her
two eyes, and will not call me with a word.

BEG-INNISH

Bring Kateen-beug and Maurya Jude
To dance in Beg-Innish,¹
And when the lads (they're in Dunquin)
Have sold their crabs and fish,

¹ The accent is on the last syllable.

Wave fawny shawls and call them in,
And call the little girls who spin,
And seven weavers from Dunquin,
To dance in Beg-Innish.

I'll play you jigs, and Maurice Kean,
Where nets are laid to dry,
I've silken strings would draw a dance
From girls are lame or shy;
Four strings I've brought from Spain and France
To make your long men skip and prance,
Till stars look out to see the dance
Where nets are laid to dry.

We'll have no priest or peeler in
To dance in Beg-Innish;
But we'll have drink from M'riarty Jim
Rowed round while gannets fish,
A keg with porter to the brim,
That every lad may have his whim,
Till we up sails with M'riarty Jim
And sail from Beg-Innish.

RALPH HODGSON

Ralph Hodgson was born in Yorkshire, in 1872, one of the shyest of English lyric poets. Although he is extremely reticent concerning his life, it has been learned that Hodgson has been at various times a journalist, a professional cartoonist, a breeder of bull terriers, a traveler in America, and a teacher. In 1924, Hodgson became lecturer in English literature at Sendai University, Japan, and has returned to the Orient several times in that capacity.

As a poet, Hodgson shares many of Housman's traits. Like Housman he has written comparatively little — most of his work is gathered in a small collection entitled simply *Poems* — and, also like Housman, his poems are on an unusually high level. His style is delicate but firm, and his poems are full of a love for all natural things, particularly the small and helpless, a love that goes out to

... an idle rainbow
No less than laboring seas.

Although his short lyrics are among the freshest of the period, the longer verses are beautifully sustained; they are an almost perfect combination of meaning and magic. One succumbs to the charm of "Eve" at the first reading; here is the oldest of legends told with a strange simplicity which is, in itself, a novelty. This Eve is neither the conscious sinner nor the traditional mother of men; she is, in these seemingly artless lines, any young motherless country girl, filling her basket, regarding the world and evil itself with a frank, childlike wonder. Such snatches of music as this and "Time, You Old Gypsy Man" seem destined for a long life.

TIME, YOU OLD GYPSY MAN

Time, you old gypsy man,
Will you not stay,
Put up your caravan
Just for one day?

All things I'll give you
Will you be my guest,
Bells for your jennet
Of silver the best,
Goldsmiths shall beat you
A great golden ring,
Peacocks shall bow to you,
Little boys sing,
Oh, and sweet girls will
Festoon you with may.
Time, you old gypsy,
Why hasten away?

Last week in Babylon,
Last night in Rome,
Morning, and in the crush
Under Paul's dome;
Under Paul's dial
You tighten your rein —
Only a moment,
And off once again;

Off to some city
Now blind in the womb,
Off to another
Ere that's in the tomb.

Time, you old gypsy man,
Will you not stay,
Put up your caravan
Just for one day?

THE BIRDCATCHER

When flighting time is on, I go
With clap-net and decoy,
A-fowling after goldfinches
And other birds of joy;

I lurk among the thickets of
The Heart where they are bred,
And catch the twittering beauties as
They fly into my Head.

AFTER

"How fared you when you mortal were?
What did you see on my peopled star?"
"Oh, well enough," I answered her,
It went for me where mortals are!

"I saw blue flowers and the merlin's flight,
And the rime on the wintry tree;
Blue doves I saw and summer light
On the wings of the cinnamon bee."

STUPIDITY STREET

I saw with open eyes
Singing birds sweet
Sold in the shops

RALPH HODGSON

For the people to eat,
Sold in the shops of
Stupidity Street.

I saw in a vision
The worm in the wheat,
And in the shops nothing
For people to eat:
Nothing for sale in
Stupidity Street.

REASON

Reason has moons, but moons not hers
Lie mirrored on her sea,
Confusing her astronomers,
But O! delighting me.

EVE

Eve, with her basket, was
Deep in the bells and grass,
Wading in bells and grass
Up to her knees.
Picking a dish of sweet
Berries and plums to eat,
Down in the bells and grass
Under the trees.

Mute as a mouse in a
Corner the cobra lay,
Curled round a bough of the
Cinnamon tall. . . .
Now to get even and
Humble proud heaven and
Now was the moment or
Never at all.

"Eva!" Each syllable
Light as a flower fell,
"Eva!" he whispered the
Wondering maid,
Soft as a bubble sung
Out of a linnet's lung,
Soft and most silverly
"Eva!" he said.

Picture that orchard sprite;
Eve, with her body white,
Supple and smooth to her
Slim finger tips;
Wondering, listening,
Listening, wondering,
Eve with a berry
Half-way to her lips.

Oh, had our simple Eve
Seen through the make-believe!
Had she but known the
Pretender he was!
Out of the boughs he came,
Whispering still her name,
Tumbling in twenty rings
Into the grass.

Here was the strangest pair
In the world anywhere,
Eve in the bells and grass
Kneeling, and he
Telling his story low. . . .
Singing birds saw them go
Down the dark path to
The Blasphemous Tree.

Oh, what a clatter when
Titmouse and Jenny Wren

RALPH HODGSON

Saw him successful and
Taking his leave!
How the birds rated him,
How they all hated him!
How they all pitied
Poor motherless Eve!

Picture her crying
Outside in the lane,
Eve, with no dish of sweet
Berries and plums to eat,
Haunting the gate of the
Orchard in vain. . . .
Picture the lewd delight
Under the hill tonight —
"Eva!" the toast goes round,
"Eva!" again.

THE MYSTERY

He came and took me by the hand
Up to a red rose tree,
He kept His meaning to Himself
But gave a rose to me.

I did not pray Him to lay bare
The mystery to me,
Enough the rose was Heaven to smell,
And His own face to see.

JOHN MCCRAE

John McCrae was born in Guelph, Ontario, Canada, in 1872. He was graduated in arts in 1894 and in medicine in 1898, finished his studies at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore and returned to Canada. He was a lieutenant of artillery in South Africa (1899-1900) and was in charge of the Medical Division of the McGill Canadian General Hospital during the World War. After serving two years, he died of

pneumonia, January, 1918, his volume *In Flanders Fields* (1919) appearing posthumously.

Few who read the title-poem of his book, possibly the most widely-read poem produced by the war, realize that it is a perfect rondeau, one of the loveliest and strictest of the French forms.

IN FLANDERS FIELDS

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

WALTER DE LA MARE

Walter de la Mare was born in Kent in 1873, but he has lived in and around London most of his life. For many years he was employed in a clerical position by the English branch of the Standard Oil Company, but he hated "the drudgery at the desk's dead wood."

De la Mare was almost thirty before he ventured to publish his first volume, *Songs of Childhood* (1902), and even then he published it under a pseudonym, "Walter Ramal." Succeeding volumes, beginning with *Peacock Pie* (1913), proved he was, as Harold Williams wrote, essentially "the singer of a young and romantic world, a singer even for children, understanding and perceiving as a child."

De la Mare paints scenes of miniature loveliness; he uses thin-spun fragments of fairy-like delicacy and gives them solidity and strength.

De la Mare is an astonishing joiner of words; he surprises us by transforming what began as a child's nonsense-rhyme into a thrilling snatch of music. The trick of revealing the ordinary in whimsical colors, of catching the commonplace off its guard, is part of De la Mare's charm.

The poet's other gift is his sense of the supernatural, of the fantastic world that lies on the edge of consciousness. *The Listeners* (1912) is a book that is full of half-heard whispers; moonlight and mystery seem soaked in the lines, and a cool wind from Nowhere blows over them. The magical title-poem, "The Listeners," is an example. In this poem there is an uncanny splendor; here is the effect, the thrill, the overtones of a ghost story rather than the narrative itself. "The Listeners" may be the tale of a traveler coming at dusk upon a haunted house and daring to summon its dread occupants; it may be a spirit returning to the scene of weird adventures; it may be a symbol of mankind, lost and surrounded by sinister shadows, but bravely challenging whatever is present or to come. The important thing about the poem, however, is its very suggestiveness; never have silence and creeping darkness been so subtly communicated, so persuasive and penetrating.

Later works, such as *The Veil* (1921), *The Fleeting and Other Poems* (1934) and that extraordinary novel, *Memoirs of a Midget* (1921), show a more somber strain. There is a weariness in the poems of this period, but the harmonies in *Collected Poems 1901-1918* are always delicate and continually explore the worlds which remain beyond the reach of reality.

SILVER

Slowly, silently, now the moon
Walks the night in her silver shoon;
This way, and that, she peers, and sees
Silver fruit upon silver trees;
One by one the casements catch
Her beams beneath the silvery thatch;
Couched in his kennel, like a log,
With paws of silver sleeps the dog;
From their shadowy cote the white breasts peep
Of doves in a silver-feathered sleep;

A harvest mouse goes scampering by,
With silver claws and a silver eye;
And moveless fish in the water gleam,
By silver reeds in a silver stream.

THE LISTENERS

"Is there anybody there?" said the Traveler,
Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
Of the forest's ferny floor.
And a bird flew up out of the turret,
Above the Traveler's head:
And he smote upon the door again a second time;
"Is there anybody there?" he said.
But no one descended to the Traveler;
No head from the leaf-fringed sill
Leaned over and looked into his gray eyes,
Where he stood perplexed and still.
But only a host of phantom listeners
That dwelt in the lone house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
To that voice from the world of men:
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,
That goes down to the empty hall,
Harkening in an air stirred and shaken
By the lonely Traveler's call.
And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
Their stillness answering his cry,
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
'Neath the starred and leafy sky;
For he suddenly smote on the door, even
Louder, and lifted his head: —
"Tell them I came, and no one answered,
That I kept my word," he said.
Never the least stir made the listeners,
Though every word he spake
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house
From the one man left awake:

Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward,
When the plunging hoofs were gone.

AN EPITAPH

Here lies a most beautiful lady,
Light of step and heart was she;
I think she was the most beautiful lady
That ever was in the West Country.

But beauty vanishes; beauty passes;
However rare — rare it be;
And when I crumble, who will remember
This lady of the West Country?

SUMMER EVENING

The sandy cat by the Farmer's chair
Mews at his knee for dainty fare;
Old Rover in his moss-greened house
Mumbles a bone, and barks at a mouse.
In the dewy fields the cattle lie
Chewing the cud 'neath a fading sky.
Dobbin at manger pulls his hay:
Gone is another summer's day.

OLD SUSAN

When Susan's work was done, she'd sit
With one fat guttering candle lit,
And window opened wide to win
The sweet night air to enter in;
There, with a thumb to keep her place,
She'd read, with stern and wrinkled face.

Her mild eyes gliding very slow
Across the letters to and fro,
While wagged the guttering candle flame
In the wind that through the window came.

And sometimes in the silence she
Would mumble a sentence audibly,
Or shake her head as if to say,
" You silly souls, to act this way! "
And never a sound from night I'd hear,
Unless some far-off cock crowed clear;
Or her old shuffling thumb should turn
Another page; and rapt and stern,
Through her great glasses bent on me
She'd glance into reality;
And shake her round old silvery head,
With — " You! — I thought you was in bed! " —
Only to tilt her book again,
And rooted in Romance remain.

CHICKEN

Clapping her platter stood plump Bess,
And all across the green
Came scampering in, on wing and claw
Chicken fat and lean: —
Dorking, Spaniard, Cochín China,
Bantams sleek and small,
Like feathers blown in a great wind,
They came at Bessie's call.

THERE BLOOMS NO BUD IN MAY

There blooms no bud in May
Can for its white compare
With snow at break of day,
On fields forlorn and bare.

For shadow it hath rose,
Azure, and amethyst;
And every air that blows
Dies out in beauteous mist.

It hangs the frozen bough
With flowers on which the night
Wheeling her darkness through
Scatters a starry light.

Fearful of its pale glare
In flocks the starlings rise;
Slide through the frosty air,
And perch with plaintive cries.

Only the inky rook,
Hunched cold in ruffled wings,
Its snowy nest forsook,
Caws of unnumbered Springs.

PEACE

Night arches England, and the winds are still;
Jasmine and honeysuckle steep the air;
Softly the stars that are all Europe's fill
Her heaven-wide dark with radiancy fair;
That shadowed moon now waxing in the west,
Stirs not a rumor in her tranquil seas;
Mysterious sleep has lulled her heart to rest,
Deep even as theirs beneath her churchyard trees.

Secure, serene; dumb now the nighthawk's threat;
The guns' low thunder drumming o'er the tide;
The anguish pulsing in her stricken side . . .
All is at peace. Ah, never, heart, forget
For this her youngest, best and bravest died,
These bright dews once were mixed with bloody sweat.

Gilbert Keith Chesterton was born in Kensington, London, May 29, 1874. He began his literary life by reviewing books on art, and soon became known as one of the most versatile writers of his day. He was an energetic and productive force as journalist, novelist, dramatist, essayist, parodist, publicist, and lyricist. He produced books on religion and detective novels with equal facility and conviction. Whether he wrote serious biographies, such as his *Charles Dickens* (1906), or wildly fantastic narratives, such as *The Club of Queer Trades* (1905) and *The Flying Inn* (1914), he was witty, always surprising and always stimulating. Chesterton died June 14, 1936.

As a poet, he suffered sometimes from his very buoyancy and love of paradox. From his first volume of verse, *The Wild Knight and Other Poems* (1900) to *New and Collected Poems* (1929) the lines are swift, full of banging rhymes and tramping rhythms. The criticism he made of Mrs. Browning's style applies with equal force to him: "Whenever her verse is bad, it is bad from some extravagance of imagery, some kind of debauch of cleverness." Yet the best of his ballads and lyrics are not only swinging but inspiring even when they are sad or satirical.

"Lepanto" is one of the most rousing of modern ballad narratives. Anticipating Vachel Lindsay's "The Congo" and other chants, Chesterton retells the story of the Crusaders under the leadership of Don John, who commanded the combined Christian navies in 1571 and broke the power of the Turks; he revivifies the details, changing them from dry historical data into drama. The syllables beat as though on brass; the armies sing, the feet tramp, the drums snarl, and the tides of marching crusaders roll resonantly out of lines like:

Strong gongs groaning as the guns boom far,
Don John of Austria is going to the war;
Stiff flags straining in the night-blasts cold
In the gloom black-purple, in the glint old-gold;
Torchlight crimson on the copper kettle-drums,
Then the tuckets, then the trumpets, then the cannon, and he
comes. . . .

No discussion of Chesterton would be complete without a tribute to his epigrammatic power. "The Donkey" and "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" are noteworthy examples of such condensation.

As a politician and paradoxical essayist, Chesterton will have an interest for future critics, but Chesterton the poet will outlive his period.

LEPANTO ¹

White founts falling in the Courts of the sun,
And the Soldan of Byzantium is smiling as they run;
There is laughter like the fountains in that face of all men
feared,

It stirs the forest darkness, the darkness of his beard;
It curls the blood-red crescent, the crescent of his lips;
For the inmost sea of all the earth is shaken with his ships.
They have dared the white republics up the capes of Italy,
They have dashed the Adriatic round the Lion of the Sea,
And the Pope has cast his arms abroad for agony and loss,
And called the kings of Christendom for swords about the
Cross.

The cold queen of England is looking in the glass;
The shadow of the Valois is yawning at the Mass;
From evening isles fantastical rings faint the Spanish gun,
And the Lord upon the Golden Horn is laughing in the sun.

Dim drums throbbing, in the hills half heard,
Where only on a nameless throne a crownless prince has
stirred,

Where, risen from a doubtful seat and half attained stall,
The last knight of Europe takes weapons from the wall,
The last and lingering troubadour to whom the bird has
sung,

That once went singing southward when all the world was
young.

In that enormous silence, tiny and unafraid,
Comes up along a winding road the noise of the Crusade.

Strong gongs groaning as the guns boom far,
Don John of Austria is going to the war,
Stiff flags straining in the night-blasts cold
In the gloom black-purple, in the glint old-gold;
Torchlight crimson on the copper kettle-drums,
Then the tuckets, then the trumpets, then the cannon, and
he comes.

¹ See pages 430-431.

Don John laughing in the brave beard curled,
Spurning of his stirrups like the thrones of all the world,
Holding his head up for a flag of all the free.
Love-light of Spain — hurrah!
Death-light of Africa!
Don John of Austria
Is riding to the sea.

Mahound¹ is in his paradise above the evening star,
(*Don John of Austria is going to the war.*)
He moves a mighty turban on the timeless houri's knees,
His turban that is woven of the sunsets and the seas.
He shakes the peacock gardens as he rises from his ease,
And he strides among the tree-tops and is taller than the
trees;
And his voice through all the garden is a thunder sent to
bring
Black Azrael and Ariel and Ammon² on the wing.
Giants and the Genii,
Multiplex of wing and eye,
Whose strong obedience broke the sky
When Solomon was king.

They rush in red and purple from the red clouds of the
morn,
From the temples where the yellow gods shut up their eyes
in scorn;
They rise in green robes roaring from the green hells of the
sea
Where fallen skies and evil hues and eyeless creatures be,
On them the sea-valves cluster and the gray sea-forests curl,
Splashed with a splendid sickness, the sickness of the pearl;
They swell in sapphire smoke out of the blue cracks of the
ground, —
They gather and they wonder and give worship to Mahound.
And he saith, "Break up the mountains where the hermit-
folk can hide,

¹ *Mahound*: Mohammed.

² These are demons and powerful spirits of the heathen.

And sift the red and silver sands lest bone of saint abide,
 And chase the Giaours¹ flying night and day, not giving rest,
 For that which was our trouble comes again out of the west.
 We have set the seal of Solomon on all things under sun,
 Of knowledge and of sorrow and endurance of things done.
 But a noise is in the mountains, in the mountains, and I
 know

The voice that shook our palaces — four hundred years ago:
 It is he that saith not 'Kismet'; it is he that knows not Fate;
 It is Richard, it is Raymond, it is Godfrey at the gate!
 It is he whose loss is laughter when he counts the wager
 worth.

Put down your feet upon him, that our peace be on the
 earth."

For he heard drums groaning and he heard guns jar,
 (*Don John of Austria is going to the war.*)

Sudden and still — hurrah!

Bolt from Iberia!

Don John of Austria

Is gone by Alcalar.

St. Michael's on his Mountain in the sea-roads of the north
 (*Don John of Austria is girt and going forth.*)

Where the gray seas glitter and the sharp tides shift

And the sea-folk labor and the red sails lift.

He shakes his lance of iron and he claps his wings of stone;

The noise is gone through Normandy; the noise is gone
 alone;

The North is full of tangled things and texts and aching
 eyes,

And dead is all the innocence of anger and surprise,

And Christian killeth Christian in a narrow dusty room,

And Christian dreadeth Christ that hath a newer face of
 doom,

And Christian hateth Mary that God kissed in Galilee, —

But Don John of Austria is riding to the sea.

Don John calling through the blast and the eclipse

¹ *Giaours*: Christians.

Crying with the trumpet, with the trumpet of his lips,
Trumpet that sayeth *ha!*

*Domino gloria!*¹

Don John of Austria
Is shouting to the ships.

The Pope was in his chapel before day or battle broke,
(*Don John of Austria is hidden in the smoke.*)

The hidden room in man's house where God sits all the
year,

The secret window whence the world looks small and very
dear.

He sees as in a mirror on the monstrous twilight sea
The crescent of his cruel ships whose name is mystery;
They fling great shadows foe-wards, making Cross and Castle
dark,

They veil the plumèd lions on the galleys of St. Mark;
And above the ships are palaces of brown, black-bearded
chiefs,

And below the ships are prisons, where with multitudinous
griefs,

Christian captives sick and sunless, all a laboring race
repines

Like a race in sunken cities, like a nation in the mines.

They are lost like slaves that *swat*,² and in the skies of morn-
ing hung

The stair-ways of the tallest gods when tyranny was young.
They are countless, voiceless, hopeless as those fallen or
fleeing on

Before the high Kings' horses in the granite of Babylon.

And many a one grows witless in his quiet room in hell

Where a yellow face looks inward through the lattice of his
cell,

And he finds his God forgotten, and he seeks no more a
sign —

(*But Don John of Austria has burst the battle-line!*)

Don John pounding from the slaughter-painted poop,
Purpling all the ocean like a bloody pirate's sloop,

¹ *Domino gloria*: Glory to God! ² *swat*: old form of sweat.

Scarlet running over on the silvers and the golds,
Breaking of the hatches up and bursting of the holds,
Thronging of the thousands up that labor under sea
White for bliss and blind for sun and stunned for liberty.

Vivat Hispania!

Domino Gloria!

Don John of Austria

Has set his people free!

Cervantes on his galley sets the sword back in the sheath
(*Don John of Austria rides homeward with a wreath.*)

And he sees across a weary land a straggling road in Spain,
Up which a lean and foolish knight forever rides in vain,
And he smiles, but not as Sultans smile, and settles back the
blade. . . .

(*But Don John of Austria rides home from the Crusade.*)

THE DONKEY

When fishes flew and forests walked
And figs grew upon thorn,
Some moment when the moon was blood,
Then surely I was born;

With monstrous head and sickening cry
And ears like errant wings,
The devil's walking parody
On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,
Of ancient crooked will;
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.

Fools! For I also had my hour;
One far fierce hour and sweet:
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms before my feet.

ELEGY IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

The men that worked for England
They have their graves at home;
And bees and birds of England
About the cross can roam.

But they that fought for England,
Following a falling star,
Alas, alas, for England .
They have their graves afar.

And they that rule in England
In stately conclave met,
Alas, alas, for England
They have no graves as yet.

JOHN MASEFIELD

John Masefield was born in Ledbury, in the western county of Herefordshire, June 1, 1878. His father was a lawyer, but the son craved the sea even as a child. At fourteen young Masefield was apprenticed as a cabin boy; at seventeen he made his first trip to America. In 1895 he landed in New York with less than five dollars in his pocket, hoping to become a writer, to express the music of the sea, the wind in the rigging, and the men "hard-palmed from tallying on to whips." He had already fallen in love with the vigor and humanity of Chaucer — "it was Chaucer who made me realize what poetry could be" — but he was as yet unable to capture the voice of the sea and put it into verse. For a while he worked in a Greenwich Village saloon as bus-boy, cuspidor-cleaner, emergency waiter, and bouncer; then he found a job in a carpet factory in Yonkers. He returned to England where his first book, *Salt Water Ballads* (1902), was published in his twenty-fourth year. By the time he was fifty-five he had written more than sixty different volumes.

The early books reflect his wanderings; the poems in *Ballads* (1903) and the prose in *A Mainsail Haul* (1905) may be crude, but there is no doubt about the vitality and human feeling. Here, as in the succeeding works, Masefield speaks up for the "men with the broken heads and the blood running into their eyes," not for the

rulers and princes, hut the scorned and the rejected. He celebrates the brave souls who always

. . . will prefer the wild,
Long after life is meek and mild.

Although Masefield continued to sing about strenuous action and the communion of hearty spirits, it was not until *The Everlasting Mercy* (1911) that he became famous. Here, as in the other long narrative poems, *The Widow in the Bye Street* (1912), the autobiographical *Dauber* (1912), and *The Daffodil Fields* (1913), there is a frank pleasure in "the mere living" a rough joy which could not be communicated by soft phrases and delicate images. Yet, even in the midst of the pictures of the hardships of existence, one is struck with life's casual wonder.

Reynard the Fox (1919) is probably the most national of Masefield's works, and it is said to have done more than any other poem to win him the office of poet laureate which was awarded to him in 1930. His later work is quieter and more questioning in tone. Although after 1930 Masefield produced too much undistinguished work in too many forms — novels, essays, plays, hooks for young people, adaptations of old legends — his enlarged *Collected Poems* (1935) exhibit his main theme: the mystery of life and the "joy of trying for beauty," a vivid combination of physical exulting and spiritual exaltation.

A CONSECRATION

Not of the princes and prelates with periwigged charioteers
Riding triumphantly laureled to lap the fat of the years, —
Rather the scorned — the rejected — the men hemmed in
with the spears;

The men of the tattered battalion which fights till it dies,
Dazed with the dust of the battle, the din and the cries.
The men with the broken heads and the blood running into
their eyes.

Not the bemedaled Commander, beloved of the throne,
Riding cock-horse to parade when the bugles are blown,
But the lads who carried the koppie¹ and cannot be known.

¹ A corruption of "kopje," a South African term for a small hill. The line refers to the unknown privates who stormed and captured the hills in the Boer War.

Not the ruler for me, but the ranker, the tramp of the road,
The slave with the sack on his shoulders pricked on with the
 goad,
The man with too weighty a burden, too weary a load.

The sailor, the stoker of steamers, the man with the clout,
The chantyman bent at the halliards¹ putting a tune to the
shout,
The drowsy man at the wheel and the tired look-out.

Others may sing of the wine and the wealth and the mirth,
The portly presence of potentates goodly in girth; —
Mine be the dirt and the dross, the dust and scum of the
earth!

Thine be the music, the color, the glory, the gold;
 Mine be a handful of ashes, a mouthful of mold.
 Of the maimed, of the halt and the blind in the rain and
 the cold —
 Of these shall my songs be fashioned, my tales be told.
AMEN.

SEA-FEVER

I must down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's
shaking,
And a gray mist on the sea's face and a gray dawn breaking.

I must down to the seas again, for the call of the running
 tide
 Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;

¹ The sailor who led the songs (or "chantys") while the men pulled rhythmically on the halliards (or "hauyard") to raise or lower sail.

And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls
crying.

I must down to the seas again to the vagrant gypsy life.
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like
a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's
over.

LAUGH AND BE MERRY

Laugh and be merry, remember, better the world with a song,
Better the world with a blow in the teeth of a wrong.
Laugh, for the time is brief, a thread the length of a span.
Laugh, and be proud to belong to the old proud pageant of
man.

Laugh and be merry: remember, in olden time,
God made Heaven and Earth for joy He took in a rhyme,
Made them, and filled them full with the strong red wine of
His mirth,
The splendid joy of the stars: the joy of the earth.

So we must laugh and drink from the deep blue cup of the
sky,
Join the jubilant song of the great stars sweeping by,
Laugh, and battle, and work, and drink of the wine outpoured
In the dear green earth, the sign of the joy of the Lord.

Laugh and be merry together, like brothers akin,
Guesting awhile in the rooms of a beautiful inn,
Glad till the dancing stops, and the lilt of the music ends.
Laugh till the game is played; and be you merry, my friends.

ROUNDING THE HORN

(From "Dauber")

Then came the cry of "Call all hands on deck!"
The Dauber knew its meaning; it was come:
Cape Horn, that tramples beauty into wreck,
And crumples steel and smites the strong man dumb.
Down clattered flying kites and staysails; some
Sang out in quick, high calls: the fair-leads skirled,
And from the south-west came the end of the world . . .

"Lay out!" the Bosun yelled. The Dauber laid
Out on the yard, gripping the yard, and feeling
Sick at the mighty space of air displayed
Below his feet, where mewing birds were wheeling.
A giddy fear was on him; he was reeling.
He bit his lip half through, clutching the jack.
A cold sweat glued the shirt upon his back.

The yard was shaking, for a brace was loose.
He felt that he would fall; he clutched, he bent,
Clammy with natural terror to the shoes
While idiotic promptings came and went.
Snow fluttered on a wind-flaw and was spent;
He saw the water darken. Someone yelled,
"Frap it; don't stay to furl! Hold on!" He held.

Darkness came down — half darkness — in a whirl;
The sky went out, the waters disappeared.
He felt a shocking pressure of blowing hurl
The ship upon her side. The darkness speared
At her with wind; she staggered, she careered;
Then down she lay. The Dauber felt her go,
He saw her yard tilt downwards. Then the snow

Whirled all about — dense, multitudinous, cold —
Mixed with the wind's one devilish thrust and shriek,
Which whiffled out men's tears, defeated, took hold,
Flattening the flying drift against the cheek.

The yards buckled and bent, man could not speak.
The ship lay on her broadside; the wind's sound
Had devilish malice at having got her downed.

.

How long the gale had blown he could not tell,
Only the world had changed, his life had died.
A moment now was everlasting hell.
Nature an onslaught from the weather side,
A withering rush of death, a frost that cried,
Shrieked, till he withered at the heart; a hail
Plastered his oilskins with an icy mail. . . .

"Up!" yelled the Bosun; "up and clear the wreck!"
The Dauber followed where he led; below
He caught one giddy glimpsing of the deck
Filled with white water, as though heaped with snow.
He saw the streamers of the rigging blow
Straight out like pennons from the splintered mast,
Then, all sense dimmed, all was an icy blast.

Roaring from nether hell and filled with ice,
Roaring and crashing on the jerking stage,
An utter bridle given to utter vice,
Limitless power mad with endless rage
Withering the soul; a minute seemed an age.
He clutched and hacked at ropes, at rags of sail,
Thinking that comfort was a fairy tale,

Told long ago — long, long ago — long since
Heard of in other lives — imagined, dreamed —
There where the basest beggar was a prince.
To him in torment where the tempest screamed,
Comfort and warmth and ease no longer seemed
Things that a man could know; soul, body, brain,
Knew nothing but the wind, the cold, the pain.

TOMORROW

Oh yesterday the cutting edge drank thirstily and deep,
The upland outlaws ringed us in and herded us as sheep,
They drove us from the stricken field and bayed us into keep;

But tomorrow,
By the living God, we'll try the game again!

Oh yesterday our little troop was ridden through and through,
Our swaying, tattered pennons fled, a broken, beaten few,
And all a summer afternoon they hunted us and slew;

But tomorrow,
By the living God, we'll try the game again!

And here upon the turret-top the bale-fire glowers red,
The wake-lights burn and drip about our hacked, disfigured dead,

And many a broken heart is here and many a broken head;
But tomorrow,
By the living God, we'll try the game again!

W. W. GIBSON

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson was born in 1878 in Hexam among the gaunt Northumberland hills. His early work was imitative, derived from the romantic Victorians, sentimental in tone. The titles suggest the manner: *Urlyn the Harper* (1902), *The Queen's Vigil* (1903), and *The Nets of Love*.

Influenced by Masefield and the growing realism of the period, Gibson executed a complete right about face in his thirtieth year. With *Daily Bread* (1910), *Fires* (1912), *Borderlands* (1914), and *Livelihood* (1917) Gibson wrote a series of dramatic poems expressing the dreams, the labors, and the fears of common humanity. At his best in the dramatic monolog, Gibson justifies his title in England as "the poet of contemporary industrial life."

Gibson's later work suffers from a thinning out of power; facility is evident in *Krindlesyke* (1922) and *Kestrel Edge* (1924) but little else. Best and worst are combined in *Collected Poems: 1905-1925*, in which such poems as those here reprinted have a particular vitality.

THE WHITE DUST

I felt no tremor and I caught no sound;
 But a fresh crack scored my ceiling: white dust dropped,
 Sprinkling my polished table . . .

Underground,

Fathoms beneath my comfortable room,
 In the pit's dripping gloom,
 A new drift's rock-roof, insecurely propped,
 Had settled; and, in settling, crushed just then
 The life out of six men:
 Six hearts had stopped . . .

But I, unguessing, looked up fretfully
 At the fresh crack; and rose impatiently
 To wipe the dust from my mahogany.

THE STONE

"And will you cut a stone for him,
 To set above his head?
 And will you cut a stone for him —
 A stone for him?" she said.

Three days before, a splintered rock
 Had struck her lover dead —
 Had struck him in the quarry dead,
 Where, careless of the warning call,
 He loitered, while the shot was fired —
 A lively stripling, brave and tall,
 And sure of all his heart desired . . .
 A flash, a shock,
 A rumbling fall . . .
 And, broken 'neath the broken rock,
 A lifeless heap, with face of clay;
 And still as any stone he lay,
 With eyes that saw the end of all.

I went to break the news to her;
 And I could hear my own heart beat

With dread of what my lips might say.
But some poor fool had sped before;
And flinging wide her father's door,
Had blurted out the news to her,
Had struck her lover dead for her,
Had struck the girl's heart dead in her,
Had struck life, lifeless, at a word,
And dropped it at her feet:
Then hurried on his witless way,
Scarce knowing she had heard.

And when I came, she stood, alone
A woman, turned to stone:
And, though no word at all she said,
I knew that all was known.

Because her heart was dead,
She did not sigh nor moan,
His mother wept:
She could not weep.
Her lover slept:
She could not sleep.
Three days, three nights,
She did not stir:
Three days, three nights,
Were one to her,
Who never closed her eyes
From sunset to sunrise,
From dawn to evenfall:
Her tearless, staring eyes,
That seeing naught, saw all.

The fourth night when I came from work,
I found her at my door.
"And will you cut a stone for him?"
She said and spoke no more:
But followed me, as I went in,
And sank upon a chair;
And fixed her gray eyes on my face,

With still, unseeing stare.
And, as she waited patiently,
I could not bear to feel
Those still, gray eyes that followed me,
Those eyes that plucked the heart from me,
Those eyes that sucked the breath from me
And curdled the warm blood in me,
Those eyes that cut me to the bone,
And pierced my marrow like cold steel.

And so I rose, and sought a stone;
And cut it, smooth and square:
And, as I worked, she sat and watched,
Beside me, in her chair.
Night after night, by candlelight,
I cut her lover's name:
Night after night, so still and white,
And like a ghost she came;
And sat beside me in her chair;
And watched with eyes aflame.

She eyed each stroke;
And hardly stirred:
She never spoke
A single word:
And not a sound or murmur broke
The quiet, save the mallet-stroke.
With still eyes ever on my hands,
With eyes that seemed to burn my hands,
My wincing, overwearied hands,
She watched, with bloodless lips apart,
And silent, indrawn breath:
And every stroke my chisel cut,
Death cut still deeper in her heart:
The two of us were chiseling,
Together, I and death.

And when at length the job was done,
And I had laid the mallet by,

As if, at last, her peace were won,
She breathed his name; and, with a sigh,
Passed slowly through the open door:
And never crossed my threshold more.

Next night I labored late, alone,
To cut her name upon the stone.

SIGHT

By the lamplit stall I loitered, feasting my eyes
On colors ripe and rich for the heart's desire —
Tomatoes, redder than Krakatoa's ¹ fire,
Oranges like old sunsets over Tyre,
And apples golden-green as the glades of Paradise.

And as I lingered, lost in divine delight,
My heart thanked God for the goodly gift of sight
And all youth's lively senses keen and quick . . .
When suddenly, behind me in the night,
I heard the tapping of a blind man's stick.

EDWARD THOMAS

(Philip) Edward Thomas was born in 1878, was educated at Oxford, and supported himself for many years by writing reviews, travel-books, biographies, and odd literary jobs "to keep the pot boiling." It was only when Robert Frost came to England and took up his residence near the Thomas home that the English writer, influenced by the American, turned to poetry.

Loving, like Frost, the commonplaces of existence, the quaint and casual turn of ordinary life, Thomas caught the magic of the English countryside in its unpoetic aspects. *Poems* (1917), dedicated to Robert Frost, is full of Thomas's fidelity to little things, things as unglorified as the unfreezing of the "rock-like mud," a list of quaint-sounding villages, birds' nests uncovered by the autumn wind, dusty nettles. His lines glow with a deep reverence for the soil. *Last Poems*

¹ Krakatoa: A great volcano near Java.

(published posthumously in 1919) is full of evidences that Thomas knew the life and landscapes of the country "from the inside." As Henry Newbolt has written, "He did not so much inhabit England as haunt it."

Thomas was killed at Arras, at an observatory outpost, on Easter Monday, 1917. His *Collected Poems* appeared in 1929 with an introduction by Walter de la Mare.

TALL NETTLES

Tall nettles cover up, as they have done
These many springs, the rusty harrow, the plow
Long worn out, and the roller made of stone:
Only the elm butt tops the nettles now.

This corner of the farmyard I like most:
As well as any bloom upon a flower
I like the dust on the nettles, never lost
Except to prove the sweetness of a shower.

IF I SHOULD EVER BY CHANCE

If I should ever by chance grow rich
I'll buy Codham, Cockridden, and Childerditch,
Roses, Pyrigo, and Lapwater,
And let them all to my elder daughter.
The rent I shall ask of her will be only
Each year's first violets, white and lonely,
The first primroses and orchises —
She must find them before I do, that is.
But if she finds a blossom on furze
Without rent they shall all forever be hers,
Codham, Cockridden, and Childerditch,
Roses, Pyrigo, and Lapwater, —
I shall give them all to my elder daughter.

COCK-CROW

Out of the wood of thoughts that grows by night
To be cut down by the sharp ax of light, —

Out of the night, two cocks together crow,
Cleaving the darkness with a silver blow:
And bright before my eyes twin trumpeters stand,
Heralds of splendor, one at either hand,
Each facing each as in a coat of arms: —
The milkers lace their boots up at the farms.

THAW

Over the land freckled with snow half-thawed
The speculating rooks at their nests cawed,
And saw from elm-tops, delicate as flower of grass,
What we below could not see, Winter pass.

HAROLD MONRO

Harold (Edward) Monro was born in 1879 in Brussels, was educated at Cambridge, scorned poetry as an undergraduate, but began writing verse soon after he graduated. In 1912 Monro founded The Poetry Bookshop, an establishment which became a London literary center, and edited the quarterly *Poetry and Drama*, which became the organ of the younger men. His own volumes, *Before Dawn* (1911) and *Children of Love* (1914), were important contributions to the Georgian movement. Monro died March 16, 1932.

Monro's later poetry, notably in *Strange Meetings* (1917) and *Real Property* (1922), reveals a mysticism which depicts the play between the world of reality and the world of fantasy; it presents strange studies of the earth from which man rose and the inanimate things he moves among. Even the most whimsical ideas attain intensity in Monro's curious and original lines. No writer has done more with "still life," with the passing trivial event and its effect upon the mind.

WIND IN THE DUSK

So wayward is the wind tonight
"Twill send the planets tumbling down;
And all the roaring trees are dight¹
In gauzes wafted from the moon.

¹ dight: an old form of "clothed" or "adorned."

HAROLD MONRO

Faint, streaky wisps of roaming cloud
Are swiftly from the mountain swirled;
The wind is like a floating shroud
Wound lightly round a shivering world.

I think I see a little star
Entangled in a knotty tree,
As trembling fishes captured are
In nets from the eternal sea.

There seems a bevy in the air
Of spirits from the sparkling skies;
There seems a maiden with her hair
All tumbled in my blinded eyes.

Blow! Scatter even if you will
The stars like spray about my eyes!
Wind, overturn the goblet, spill
On me the everlasting skies!

EVERY THING

Since man has been articulate,
Mechanical, improvidently wise,
(Servant of Fate),
He has not understood the little cries
And foreign conversations of the small
Delightful creatures that have followed him
Not far behind;
Has failed to hear the sympathetic call
Of Crockery and Cutlery, those kind
Reposeful Teraphim
Of his domestic happiness; the Stool
He sat on, or the Door he entered through:
He has not thanked them, overbearing fool!
What is he coming to?

But you should listen to the talk of these.
Honest they are, and patient they have kept;

Served him without his Thank you or his Please . . .
I often heard
The gentle Bed, a sigh between each word,
Murmuring, before I slept.
The Candle, as I blew it, cried aloud,
Then bowed,
And in a smoky argument
Into the darkness went.

The Kettle puffed a tentacle of breath: —
“ Pooh! I have boiled his water, I don't know
Why; and he always says I boil too slow.
He never calls me ‘Sukie, dear,’ and oh,
I wonder why I squander my desire
Sitting submissive on his kitchen fire.”

Now the old Copper Basin suddenly
Rattled and tumbled from the shelf,
Bumping and crying: “ I can fall by myself;
Without a woman's hand
To patronize and coax and flatter me,
I understand
The lean and poise of gravitable land.”
It gave a raucous and tumultuous shout,
Twisted itself convulsively about,
Rested upon the floor, and, while I stare,
It stares and grins at me.
The old impetuous Gas above my head
Begins irascibly to flare and fret,
Wheezing into its epileptic jet,
Reminding me I ought to go to bed.

The Rafters creak; an Empty-Cupboard door
Swings open; now a wild Plank of the floor
Breaks from its joist, and leaps behind my foot.
Down from the chimney, half a pound of Soot
Tumbles and lies, and shakes itself again.
The Putty cracks against the window-pane.
A piece of Paper in the basket shoves

Another piece, and toward the bottom moves.
My independent Pencil, while I write,
Breaks at the point: the ruminating Clock
Stirs all its body and begins to rock,
Warning the waiting presence of the Night,
Strikes the dead hour, and tumbles to the plain
Ticking of ordinary work again.

You do well to remind me, and I praise
Your strangely individual foreign ways.
You call me from myself to recognize
Companionship in your unselfish eyes.
I want your dear acquaintances, although
I pass you arrogantly over, throw
Your lovely sounds, and squander them along
My busy days. I'll do you no more wrong.

Purr for me, Sukie, like a faithful cat.
You, my well-trampled Boots, and you, my Hat,
Remain my friends: I feel, though I don't speak,
Your touch grow kindlier from week to week.
It well becomes our mutual happiness
To go toward the same end more or less.
There is not much dissimilarity,
Not much to choose, I know it well, in fine,
Between the purposes of you and me,
And your eventual Rubbish Heap, and mine.

THE GUEST

(A Christmas Prayer)

Tall, cool and gentle, you are here
To turn the water into wine.
Now, at the ebbing of the year,
Be you the sun we need to shine.

It is the birthday of your word;
And we are gathered. Will you come?
Let not your spirit be a sword,
O, luminous delightful lord.

Alfred Noyes was born at Staffordshire, September 16, 1880, and educated at Exeter College, Oxford. He is one of the few contemporary poets who have been fortunate enough to write a kind of poetry that is not only saleable but popular with many classes of people.

His first book, *The Loom of Years* (1902), was published when he was twenty-two years old, and *Poems* (1904) intensified his promise. Unfortunately, Noyes has not developed his gifts as deeply as his admirers have hoped. His poetry, extremely straightforward and rhythmical, has often degenerated into sentimentalities; it has also attempted to express profundities far beyond Noyes's power.

What is most appealing about Noyes is his ease and heartiness; his gift lies in the almost personal bond established between the poet and his public. People have so good a time reading his vivacious lines because Noyes had so good a time writing them. Noyes's own gusto quickens glees and catches like *Forty Singing Seamen* (1907), the lusty choruses in *Tales of the Mermaid Tavern* (1913), and the inspired nonsense of *The Forest of Wild Thyme* (1905).

Eight volumes were assembled in 1913 and published in two books of *Collected Poems*; a third collection appeared in 1920; a fourth in 1927. Although many of these pages are doomed to an early death — are, in fact, already extinct — Noyes will remain a poet pleasant to read because of the melodious "Sherwood," the lilt of "The Barrel-Organ," the gallop of "The Highwayman," and a handful of other ballads.

THE BARREL-ORGAN

There's a barrel-organ caroling across a golden street
In the City as the sun sinks low;
And the music's not immortal; but the world has made it
sweet

And fulfilled it with the sunset glow;
And it pulses through the pleasures of the City and the pain
That surround the singing organ like a large eternal light;
And they've given it a glory and a part to play again
In the Symphony that rules the day and night.

And now it's marching onward through the realms of old romance,
And trolling out a fond familiar tune,

And now it's roaring cannon down to fight the King of
France,

And now it's prattling softly to the moon.
And all around the organ there's a sea without a shore
Of human joys and wonders and regrets;
To remember and to recompense the music evermore
For what the cold machinery forgets . . .

Yes; as the music changes,
Like a prismatic glass,
It takes the light and ranges
Through all the moods that pass;
Dissects the common carnival
Of passions and regrets,
And gives the world a glimpse of all
The colors it forgets.

And there *La Traviata* sighs
Another sadder song;
And there *Il Trovatore* cries
A tale of deeper wrong;
And bolder knights to battle go
With sword and shield and lance,
Than ever here on earth below
Have whirled into — a dance!

Go down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time;
Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)
And you shall wander hand in hand with love in summer's
wonderland;
Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)

The cherry-trees are seas of bloom and soft perfume and
sweet perfume,
The cherry-trees are seas of bloom (and oh, so near to
London!)
And there they say, when dawn is high and all the world's
a blaze of sky
The cuckoo, though he's very shy, will sing a song for
London.

The nightingale is rather rare and yet they say you'll hear
him there

At Kew, at Kew in lilac-time (and oh, so near to London!)
The linnet and the throstle, too, and after dark the long
halloo

And golden-eyed *tu-whit, tu-whoo* of owls that ogle
London.

For Noah hardly knew a bird of any kind that isn't heard

At Kew, at Kew in lilac-time (and oh, so near to London!)
And when the rose begins to pout and all the chestnut spires
are out

You'll hear the rest, without a doubt, all chorusing for
London: —

*Come down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time;
Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from
London!)*

*And you shall wander hand in hand with love in summer's
wonderland;*

*Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from
London!)*

And then the troubadour begins to thrill the golden street,
In the City as the sun sinks low;

And in all the gaudy busses there are scores of weary feet

Marking time, sweet time, with a dull mechanic beat,

And a thousand hearts are plunging to a love they'll never
meet,

Through the meadows of the sunset, through the poppies and
the wheat,

In the land where the dead dreams go.

Verdi, Verdi, when you wrote *Il Trovatore* did you dream

Of the City when the sun sinks low,

Of the organ and the monkey and the many-colored stream

On the Piccadilly pavement, of the myriad eyes that seem

To be litten for a moment with a wild Italian gleam
As *A che la morte* parodies the world's eternal theme
And pulses with the sunset-glow?

There's a thief, perhaps, that listens with a face of frozen
stone

In the City as the sun sinks low;
There's a portly man of business with a balance of his own,
There's a clerk and there's a butcher of a soft reposeful tone,
And they're all of them returning to the heavens they have
known:

They are crammed and jammed in busses and — they're each
of them alone

In the land where the dead dreams go.

There's a laborer that listens to the voices of the dead

In the City as the sun sinks low;
And his hand begins to tremble and his face is rather red
As he sees a loafer watching him and — there he turns his
head

And stares into the sunset where his April love is fled,
For he hears her softly singing and his lonely soul is led
Through the land where the dead dreams go . . .

There's a barrel-organ caroling across a golden street

In the City as the sun sinks low;
Though the music's only Verdi there's a world to make it
sweet

Just as yonder yellow sunset where the earth and heaven
meet

Mellows all the sooty City! Hark, a hundred thousand feet
Are marching on to glory through the poppies and the wheat
In the land where the dead dreams go.

So it's Jeremiah, Jeremiah,
What have you to say
When you meet the garland girls
Tripping on their way?

All around my gala hat
I wear a wreath of roses
(A long and lonely year it is
I've waited for the May!)

If anyone should ask you,
The reason why I wear it is —
My own love, my true love is coming
home today.

And it's buy a bunch of violets for the lady
(*It's lilac-time in London; it's lilac-time in London!*)
Buy a bunch of violets for the lady;
While the sky burns blue above:

On the other side the street you'll find it shady
(*It's lilac-time in London; it's lilac-time in London!*)
But buy a bunch of violets for the lady,
And tell her she's your own true love.

There's a barrel-organ caroling across a golden street
In the City as the sun sinks glittering and slow;
And the music's not immortal; but the world has made it
sweet
And enriched it with the harmonies that make a song complete
In the deeper heavens of music where the night and morning
meet,
As it dies into the sunset glow;
And it pulses through the pleasures of the City and the pain
That surround the singing organ like a large eternal light,
And they've given it a glory and a part to play again
In the Symphony that rules the day and night.

And there, as the music changes,
The song runs round again;
Once more it turns and ranges
Through all its joy and pain:

Dissects the common carnival
 Of passions and regrets;
 And the wheeling world remembers all
 The wheeling song forgets.

*Come down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time;
 Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from
 London!)*
*And you shall wander hand in hand with Love in summer's
 wonderland,
 Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from
 London!)*

EPILOGUE

(From "The Flower of Old Japan")

Carol, every violet has
 Heaven for a looking-glass!

Every little valley lies
 Under many-clouded skies;
 Every little cottage stands
 Girt about with boundless lands.
 Every little glimmering pond
 Claims the mighty shores beyond —
 Shores no seaman ever hailed,
 Seas no ship has ever sailed.

All the shores when day is done
 Fade into the setting sun,
 So the story tries to teach
 More than can be told in speech.

Beauty is a fading flower,
 Truth is but a wizard's tower,
 Where a solemn death-bell tolls,
 And a forest round it rolls.

We have come by curious ways
To the light that holds the days;
We have sought in haunts of fear
For that all-enfolding sphere:
And lo! it was not far, but near.
We have found, O foolish-fond,
The shore that has no shore beyond.

Deep in every heart it lies
With its untranscended skies;
For what heaven should bend above
Hearts that own the heaven of love?
Carol, Carol, we have come
Back to heaven, back to home.

PADRAIC COLUM

Padraic Colum was born at Longford, Ireland (in the same county as Oliver Goldsmith), December 8, 1881, and was educated at the local schools. At twenty he was a member of a group that created the Irish National Theatre. He has lived in America since 1914.

Colum began as a dramatist with *Broken Soil* (1904) and *The Land* (1905), and this early dramatic tendency has colored much of his work. *Wild Earth*, his most notable collection of verse, first appeared in 1909, and an amplified edition of it was published in America in 1916. His *Dramatic Poems* appeared in 1922, *Creatures*, beautifully illustrated, in 1927. Besides his other gifts, Colum is eminently successful as an adapter, sensitive as a critic, and deservedly popular as a teller of tales for children.

THE PLOW

Sunset and silence! A man: around him earth savage, earth
broken;
Beside him two horses — a plow!

Earth savage, earth broken, the brutes, the dawn man there
in the sunset,
And the Plow that is twin to the Sword, that is founder
of cities!

"Brute-tamer, plow-maker, earth-breaker! Can'st hear?
There are ages between us.

"Is it praying you are as you stand there alone in the
sunset?

"Surely our sky-born gods can be naught to you, earth child
and earth master?

"Surely your thoughts are of Pan, or of Wotan, or Dana? ¹

"Yet, why give thought to the gods? Has Pan led your brutes
where they stumble?

"Has Dana numbed pain of the child-bed, or Wotan put
hands to your plow?

"What matter your foolish reply! O, man, standing lone and
bowed earthward,

"Your task is a day near its close. Give thanks to the night-
giving God." . . .

Slowly the darkness falls, the broken lands blend with the
savage;

The brute-tamer stands by the brutes, a head's breadth only
above them.

A head's breadth? Ay, but therein is hell's depth, and the
height up to heaven,

And the thrones of the gods and their halls, their chariots,
purples, and splendors.

JOSEPH CAMPBELL

Joseph Campbell was born in Belfast in 1881, and is not only a poet but an artist; he made all the illustrations for *The Rushlight* (1906), a volume of his own poems. Writing under the Gaelic form of his name, Seosamh MacCathmhaoil, he has published half a dozen

¹ Dana is an Irish mythological deity.

books of verse, the most striking of which is *The Mountainy Singer*, first published in Dublin in 1909. *Earth of Cualann* (1917) is a more racy offering.

THE OLD WOMAN

As a white candle
In a holy place,
So is the beauty
Of an aged face.

As the spent radiance
Of the winter sun,
So is a woman
With her travail done.

Her brood gone from her,
And her thoughts as still
As the waters
Under a ruined mill.

JAMES STEPHENS

James Stephens was born in Dublin, February, 1882, in humble surroundings. He had no formal education; he spent his youth in poverty, wandering about Ireland, frequently on the verge of starvation. Even in early manhood, after he had obtained a position as typist, he supported a wife and child for years on less than seven dollars a week. Finally one of his contributions to a magazine was noticed by George Russell ("Æ"), who encouraged Stephens and finally rescued him from clerical slavery.

Everything Stephens has written, from the early verses in *Insurrections* (1909) to *Strict Joy* (1931), from the imaginative and poetic novel *The Crock of Gold* (1912) to the somber short stories in *Etched in Moonlight* (1928), reveals a mind which is both fantastic and philosophic. Even when Stephens is most amusing he is meaningful; a poem such as "To the Four Courts, Please" is ironic but touching, "The Shell" turns from the imaginary world to the realistic everyday in the sudden contrast of the last two lines.

The chief fault of his verse is Stephens' fondness for making his simple people a little too simple and ultra-poetic; but the main effect of his prose and verse is to help form a new basis of Irish legendry, to give his native land a mythology as dramatic and as dignified as the mythology of the ancient classic world. A cumulative picture of Stephens' growth is offered in his *Collected Poems* (1926).

THE SHELL

And then I pressed the shell
Close to my ear
And listened well,
And straightway like a bell
Came low and clear
The slow, sad murmur of the distant seas,
Whipped by an icy breeze
Upon a shore
Wind-swept and desolate.
It was a sunless strand that never bore
The footprint of a man,
Nor felt the weight
Since time began
Of any human quality or stir
Save what the dreary winds and waves incur.
And in the hush of waters was the sound
Of pebbles rolling round,
Forever rolling with a hollow sound.
And bubbling sea-weeds as the waters go,
Swish to and fro
Their long, cold tentacles of slimy gray.
There was no day,
Nor ever came a night
Setting the stars alight
To wonder at the moon:
Was twilight only and the frightened croon,
Smitten to whimpers, of the dreary wind
And waves that journeyed blind —
And then I loosed my ear. . . . O, it was sweet
To hear a cart go jolting down the street.

TO THE FOUR COURTS, PLEASE

The driver rubbed at his nettly chin
With a huge, loose forefinger, crooked and black,
And his wobbly, violet lips sucked in,
And puffed out again and hung down slack:
One fang shone through his lop-sided smile,
In his little pouched eye flickered years of guile.

And the horse, poor beast, it was ribbed and forked,
And its ears hung down, and its eyes were old,
And its knees were knuckly, and as we talked
It swung the stiff neck that could scarcely hold
Its big, skinny head up — then I stepped in,
And the driver climbed to his seat with a grin.

God help the horse and the driver too,
And the people and beasts who have never a friend,
For the driver easily might have been you,
And the horse be me by a different end.
And nobody knows how their days will cease,
And the poor, when they're old, have little of peace.

LITTLE THINGS

Little things that run and quail
And die in silence and despair;

Little things that fight and fail
And fall on earth and sea and air;

All trapped and frightened little things,
The mouse, the coney, hear our prayer.

As we forgive those done to us,
The lamb, the linnet, and the hare,

Forgive us all our trespasses,
Little creatures everywhere.

WHAT TOMAS AN BUILE SAID IN A PUB

I saw God. Do you doubt it?

Do you dare to doubt it?

I saw the Almighty Man. His hand

Was resting on a mountain, and

He looked upon the World and all about it:

I saw him plainer than you see me now,

You mustn't doubt it.

He was not satisfied;

His look was all dissatisfied.

His beard swung on a wind far out of sight

Behind the world's curve, and there was light

Most fearful from His forehead, and He sighed,

"That star went always wrong, and from the start

I was dissatisfied."

He lifted up His hand —

I say He heaved a dreadful hand

Over the spinning Earth. Then I said, "Stay,

You must not strike it, God; I'm in the way;

And I will never move from where I stand."

He said, "Dear child, I feared that you were dead,"

And stayed His hand.

GOOD AND BAD

Good and bad and right and wrong,

Wave the silly words away:

This is wisdom to be strong,

This is virtue to be gay:

Let us sing and dance until

We shall know the final art,

How to banish good and ill

With the laughter of the heart.

John Drinkwater was born at Leytonstone, Essex, in 1882. Although he is best known as a dramatist, and particularly for his *Abraham Lincoln* (1918), a play founded on Lord Charnwood's biography, he began with verse and he has continually returned to it. Drinkwater was one of the group known as the Georgians, and his own volumes carry out their unpublished program, being mildly pastoral in setting and meditative in mood. His books of poems number about thirty; the best of them were chosen for *Selected Poems* (1922).

A TOWN WINDOW

Beyond my window in the night
Is but a drab inglorious street,
Yet there the frost and clean starlight
As over Warwick woods are sweet.

Under the gray drift of the town
The crocus works among the mold
As eagerly as those that crown
The Warwick spring in flame and gold.

And when the tramway down the hill
Across the cobbles moans and rings,
There is about my window-sill
The tumult of a thousand wings.

RECIPROCITY

I do not think that skies and meadows are
Moral, or that the fixture of a star
Comes of a quiet spirit, or that trees
Have wisdom in their windless silences.
Yet these are things invested in my mood
With constancy, and peace, and fortitude;
That in my troubled season I can cry
Upon the wide composure of the sky,
And envy fields, and wish that I might be
As little daunted as a star or tree.

Anna Wickham was born in Wimbledon, Surrey, in 1883. She went to Australia at six, returned when she was twenty-one, studied for opera in Paris with De Reszke and suddenly, after a few years of marriage, became a poet. In a burst of creative energy she wrote nine hundred poems in four years.

Her first two books were republished in America in one volume, *The Contemplative Quarry* (1921). The most casual reading of Anna Wickham's work reveals the strength of her candor. The poems could scarcely be put in the category of "charming" verse; they are sometimes harsh, gnarled by their own changes of mood. Her lines present the picture of woman struggling between dreams and domesticity; they are acutely sensitive, restless, analytical. The very tone of her poetry reflects the disturbed music and the nervous intensity of the poet and her age. But, even when this poet is most perturbed by her problems, she does not forget to sing.

SONG

I was so chill, and overworn, and sad,
To be a lady was the only joy I had.
I walked the street as silent as a mouse,
Buying fine clothes, and fittings for the house.

But since I saw my love
I wear a simple dress,
And happily I move
Forgetting weariness.

DOMESTIC ECONOMY

I will have few cooking-pots,
They shall be bright;
They shall reflect to blinding
God's straight light.
I will have four garments,
They shall be clean;
My service shall be good,
Though my diet be mean.
Then I shall have excess to give to the poor,
And right to counsel beggars at my door.

THE SINGER

If I had peace to sit and sing,
Then I could make a lovely thing;
But I am stung with goads and whips,
So I build songs like iron ships.

Let it be something for my song,
If it is sometimes swift and strong.

ENVOI

God, thou great symmetry,
Who put a biting lust in me
From whence my sorrows spring,
For all the frittered days
That I have spent in shapeless ways,
Give me one perfect thing.

D. H. LAWRENCE

David Herbert Lawrence was born September 17, 1885, in the mining town of Eastwood. Both of his parents were workers; Lawrence gives a graphic picture of his boyhood in *Sons and Lovers* (1913), and several of his other novels return to the scene of his youth. Lawrence obtained a scholarship, became a clerk, then a teacher, and published his first book, *The White Peacock*, in his twenty-fifth year.

Known chiefly for his highly poetic prose, Lawrence cared more for his vividly colored and passionate poetry. His many volumes of verse were gathered in the two-volume *Collected Poems* (1929), which are an extended autobiography of the flesh and spirit. Many of the poems are slight — "Green" shows why, for a time, Lawrence joined the Imagists — but almost all speak eloquently with "the hot blood's blindfold art."

After a struggle of many years, Lawrence succumbed to tuberculosis and died March 2, 1930. Up to 1938 there had appeared ten different biographies, portraits, and interpretations — and almost as many quarrels among the interpreters.

PIANO

Softly, in the dusk, a woman is singing to me;
Taking me back down the vista of years, till I see
A child sitting under the piano, in the boom of the tingling
strings
And pressing the small, poised feet of a mother who smiles
as she sings.

In spite of myself, the insidious mastery of song
Betrays me back, till the heart of me weeps to belong
To the old Sunday evenings at home, with winter outside
And hymns in the cozy parlor, the tinkling piano our guide.

So now it is vain for the singer to burst into clamor
With the great black piano appassionato. The glamour
Of childish days is upon me, my manhood is cast
Down in the flood of remembrance, I weep like a child for
the past.

GREEN

The dawn was apple-green,
The sky was green wine held up in the sun,
The moon was a golden petal between.

She opened her eyes, and green
They shone, clear like flowers undone
For the first time, now for the first time seen.

A WHITE BLOSSOM

A tiny moon as small and white as a single jasmine flower
Leans all alone above my window, on night's wintry bower,
Liquid as lime-tree blossom, soft as brilliant water or rain
She shines, the first white love of my youth, passionless and
in vain.

Humbert Wolfe was born at Milan, Italy, January 5, 1885. As he himself declared, he "lost no time in crossing to Bradford in Yorkshire, which town he reached during the same year, and remained there till he left it for Oxford some eighteen years later. Wrote increasingly unsatisfactory verse from the age of sixteen till his appointment to the British Civil Service in 1909. This appointment naturally induced in him a more restrained outlook upon life, and, beyond a few casual poems and a rejected novel, he had no literary output or recognition till after the War in 1919. In that year, he published *London Sonnets*, followed by *Shylock Reasons with Mr. Chesterton*."

After 1923 Wolfe's output increased rapidly. Between that year and 1938 he published eighteen volumes, all but three of them in verse. The outstanding quality in all of them from the delicate *Kensington Gardens* (1924) to the somber *Requiem* (1927) is the combination of grace and gravity. Sometimes the seriousness weighs down the light fancy, sometimes the charm seems out of place against a grimly serious background. But, generally, Wolfe's touch is sure, sensitive, skilful, and like no other's. From the craftsman's standpoint Wolfe is most interesting for his technical innovations, his curiously divided lines, and his use of "suspended" rhyme. But every reader can relish the wit and whimsicality which distinguish this versatile poet.

In addition to his other activities, Wolfe has edited two anthologies, a series of poetry pamphlets, has made a sequence of paraphrases from the Greek Anthology, *Others Abide* (1927), and, as a final proof of versatility, published his Greek translations at the same time as his *Cursory Rhymes* (1927), a set of sophisticated burlesques for children.

THE GRAY SQUIRREL

Like a small gray
coffee-pot,
sits the squirrel.
He is not

all he should be,
kills by dozens
trees, and eats
his red-brown cousins.

The keeper, on the
other hand
, who shot him, is
a Christian, and

loves his enemies,
which shows
the squirrel was not
one of those.

GREEN CANDLES

"There's someone at the door," said gold candlestick:
"Let her in quick, let her in quick!"
"There is a small hand groping at the handle.
Why don't you turn it?" asked green candle.

"Don't go, don't go," said the Heppelwhite chair,
"Lest you find a strange lady there."
"Yes, stay where you are," whispered the white wall:
"There is nobody there at all."

"I know her little foot," gray carpet said:
"Who but I should know her light tread?"
"She shall come in," answered the open door,
"And not," said the room, "go out any more."

LOVE IN JEOPARDY

Here by the rose-tree
they planted once
of Love in Jeopardy
an Italian bronze.

Not love the conqueror,
not love with wings,
but a boy waiting for
perilous things:

his bow unstrung,
 unsounded the zither,
and the delicate young
 hands clasped together.

as grave as the first
 boy with the first maiden,
outside of the curst
 closed gates of Eden.

But they have ravished
 away this love,
and he is not cherished
 nor spoken of,

save, whenas fluted
 from Eden, blows
for two the transmuted
 phrase of the rose,

thorn-note, blossom-note,
 note of the petal,
cool as the rain, but
 trembling a little

as though, brought hither
 from far, one sung
to a mute zither,
 with bow unstrung,

how by a rose-tree
 they planted once
of Love in Jeopardy
 an Italian bronze.

SPEKE

(A Monument in Kensington Gardens)

The children play
 at hide and seek

about the monument
to Speke.

And why should the dead
explorer mind,
who has nothing to seek
and nothing to find.

THE LILAC

Who thought of the lilac?
"I," dew said,
"I made up the lilac
out of my head."

"She made up the lilac!
Pooh!" thrilled a linnet,
and each dew-note had a
lilac in it.

SIEGFRIED SASOON

Siegfried (Lorraine) Sassoon was born September 8, 1886, descended on his mother's side from a traditional English county family, and, on his father's side, from Persian Jews who established themselves as merchants and bankers in Toledo and Baghdad in the Middle Ages.

Educated at Marlborough and Clare College, Cambridge, Sassoon spent his youth fox-hunting and verse-making. Between 1906 and 1915 Sassoon privately printed several volumes which were unconsciously imitative of Tennyson and Rossetti; after that he began consciously to burlesque his models. With *The Old Huntsman* (1917) Sassoon found his own idiom and was hailed as "one of England's most brilliant rising stars." The first poem, a long monolog obviously inspired by Masfield, gave little evidence of what was to come. Immediately following it came a series of war poems full of tragedy and bitterness. Every line of these quivering stanzas bore the mark of a sensitive and outraged nature; there was scarcely a phrase that did not protest against the "glorification" and false glamour of war.

In the World War, Sassoon was a captain in the Royal Welsh Fusileers; he served three times in France, once in Palestine, and was awarded the Military Cross for bringing in wounded under fire. His poems written in the trenches sounded an entirely new note, an outcry of anguish which was often disguised in quiet irony.

Counter-Attack appeared in 1918. In this volume Sassoon turned completely from an ordered loveliness to the gigantic brutality of war. The bloody years twisted his tenderness till what was stubborn and satiric in him forced its way to the top. In *Counter-Attack*, Sassoon found his angry outlet. Most of these poems are choked with passion; many of them are torn out, roots and all, from the very core of an intense conviction.

Early in 1920 Sassoon visited America. At the same time he brought out *Picture Show* (1920), a vigorous answer to those who feared that Sassoon had "written himself out." *Recreations* (1923), a privately distributed volume, shows Sassoon in a more playfully intellectual vein. Less direct than his deeper notes, these poems display another side of Sassoon's genius. *Satirical Poems*, a collection of this *genre*, appeared in 1926.

Sassoon's war poetry synthesizes in verse what Barbusse's *Under Fire* and Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* spread out in prose. The later work represents a further maturing. *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man* (1928) was awarded the two most coveted English literary prizes; *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* (1930) was equally praised. Both are slightly disguised autobiographies. The *Heart's Journey* (1928) and *Vigils* (1935) are a distillation of Sassoon's gifts; here, in a strangely simplified verse, are the visionary ideals of youth sharpened by experience and purified through pain.

THE DUG-OUT

Why do you lie with your legs ungainly huddled,
And one arm bent across your sullen, cold,
Exhausted face? It hurts my heart to watch you,
Deep-shadowed from the candle's guttering gold;
And you wonder why I shake you by the shoulder;
Drowsy, you mumble and sigh and turn your head. . . .
*You are too young to fall asleep forever;
And when you sleep you remind me of the dead.*

DREAMERS

Soldiers are citizens of death's gray land,
Drawing no dividend from time's tomorrows.
In the great hour of destiny they stand,
Each with his feuds, and jealousies, and sorrows.
Soldiers are sworn to action; they must win
Some flaming, fatal climax with their lives.
Soldiers are dreamers; when the guns begin
They think of firelit homes, clean beds, and wives.

I see them in foul dug-outs, gnawed by rats,
And in the ruined trenches, lashed with rain,
Dreaming of things they did with balls and bats,
And mocked by hopeless longing to regain
Bank-holidays, and picture shows, and spats,
And going to the office in the train.

THE REAR-GUARD

Groping along the tunnel, step by step,
He winked his prying torch with patching glare
From side to side, and sniffed the unwholesome air.

Tins, boxes, bottles, shapes too vague to know,
A mirror smashed, the mattress from a bed;
And he, exploring fifty feet below
The rosy gloom of battle overhead.
Tripping, he grabbed the wall; saw someone lie
Humped at his feet, half-hidden by a rug,
And stooped to give the sleeper's arm a tug.
"I'm looking for headquarters." No reply.
"God blast your neck!" (For days he'd had no sleep.)
"Get up and guide me through this stinking place."
Savage, he kicked a soft, unanswering heap,
And flashed his beam across the livid face
Terribly glaring up, whose eyes yet wore
Agony dying hard ten days before;
And fists of fingers clutched a blackening wound.

Alone he staggered on until he found
Dawn's ghost that filtered down a shafted stair
To the dazed, muttering creatures underground
Who hear the boom of shells in muffled sound.
At last, with sweat of horror in his hair,
He climbed through darkness to the twilight air,
Unloading hell behind him step by step.

DOES IT MATTER?

Does it matter? — losing your leg? . . .
For people will always be kind,
And you need not show that you mind
When the others come in after hunting
To gobble their muffins and eggs.

Does it matter? — losing your sight? . . .
There's such splendid work for the blind;
And people will always be kind,
As you sit on the terrace remembering
And turning your face to the light.

Do they matter? — those dreams from the pit? . . .
You can drink and forget and be glad,
And people won't say that you're mad;
For they'll know that you've fought for your country,
And no one will worry a bit.

BASE DETAILS

If I were fierce and bald and short of breath,
I'd live with scarlet Majors at the Base,
And speed glum heroes up the line to death.
You'd see me with my puffy petulant face,
Guzzling and gulping in the best hotel,
Reading the Roll of Honor. "Poor young chap,"
I'd say — "I used to know his father well."
Yes, we've lost heavily in this last scrap."
And when the war is done and youth stone dead,
I'd toddle safely home and die — in bed.

AFTERMATH

Have you forgotten yet? . . .

For the world's events have rumbled on since those gagged days,

Like traffic checked awhile at the crossing of city ways:

And the haunted gap in your mind has filled with thoughts that flow

Like clouds in the lit heavens of life; and you're a man re-prieved to go,

Taking your peaceful share of Time, with joy to spare.

But the past is just the same, — and War's a bloody game. . . .

Have you forgotten yet? . . .

Look down, and swear by the slain of the War that you'll never forget.

Do you remember the dark months you held the sector at Mametz, —

The nights you watched and wired and dug and piled sand-bags on parapets?

Do you remember the rats; and the stench

Of corpses rotting in front of the front-line trench, —

And dawn coming, dirty-white, and chill with a hopeless rain?

Do you ever stop and ask, "Is it all going to happen again?"

Do you remember that hour of din before the attack, —

And the anger, the blind compassion that seized and shook you then

As you peered at the doomed and haggard faces of your men?

Do you remember the stretcher-cases lurching back

With dying eyes and lolling heads, those ashen-gray

Masks of the lads who once were keen and kind and gay?

Have you forgotten yet? . . .

Look up, and swear by the green of the Spring that you'll never forget.

EVERYONE SANG¹

Everyone suddenly burst out singing;
And I was filled with such delight
As prisoned birds must find in freedom
Winging wildly across the white
Orchards and dark green fields; on; on;
and out of sight.

Everyone's voice was suddenly lifted,
And beauty came like the setting sun.
My heart was shaken with tears, and horror
Drifted away. . . . O, but every one
Was a bird; and the song was wordless; the
singing will never be done.

THE WISDOM OF THE WORLD

The wisdom of the world is this; to say "*There is
No other wisdom but to gulp what time can give*" . . .
To guard no inward vision winged with mysteries;
To hear no voices haunt the hurrying hours we live;
To keep no faith with ghostly friends; never to know
Vigils of sorrow crowned when loveless passions fade . . .
From wisdom such as this to find my gloom I go,
Companioned by those powers who keep me unafraid.

RUPERT BROOKE

Possibly the most famous of the younger Georgians, Rupert (Chawner) Brooke, was born at Rugby in August, 1887, and educated at King's College, Cambridge. As a youth, Brooke was keenly interested in all forms of athletics; playing cricket, football, tennis, and swimming as well as most professionals. He was six feet tall, his finely molded head topped with a crown of loose hair of lively brown; "a golden young Apollo," said Edward Thomas. Another friend of his wrote, "To look at, he was part of the youth of the world."

¹ This expresses the feeling released by the Armistice, the sudden joy after what seemed an eternity of war and darkness.

At the very outbreak of the war, Brooke enlisted, fired with an idealism that conquered his irony. After seeing service in Belgium, 1914, he spent the following winter in a training-camp in Dorsetshire and sailed with the British Mediterranean Expeditionary Force in February, 1915, to take part in the Dardanelles Campaign.

Brooke never reached his destination. He died of blood-poison at Skyros, April 23, 1915. His early death was one of England's great literary losses; *Collected Poems*, issued posthumously, appeared a few months after. *The Complete Poems of Rupert Brooke* (1932) reveals the full measure of his contradictory cynicism and romanticism.

Brooke's sonnet-sequence, *1914*, which, with prophetic irony, appeared a few weeks before his death, contains the accents of immortality. And "The Old Vicarage, Grantchester" (unfortunately too long to reprint in this volume), is fully as characteristic of the lighter and more playful side of Brooke's temperament. Both these phases are combined in "The Great Lover," of which Lascelles Abercrombie has written, "It is life he loves, and not in any abstract sense, but all the infinite little familiar details of life, remembered and catalogued with delightful zest."

SONNET

Oh! Death will find me, long before I tire
 Of watching you; and swing me suddenly
 Into the shade and loneliness and mire
 Of the last land! There, waiting patiently,
 One day, I think, I'll feel a cool wind blowing,
 See a slow light across the Stygian tide,
 And hear the dead about me stir, unknowing,
 And tremble. And I shall know that you have died.

And watch you, a broad-browed and smiling dream,
 Pass, light as ever, through the lightless host,
 Quietly ponder, start, and sway, and gleam —
 Most individual and bewildering ghost! —
 And turn, and toss your brown delightful head
 Amusedly, among the ancient dead.

THE GREAT LOVER

I have been so great a lover: filled my days
So proudly with the splendor of Love's praise,
The pain, the calm, and the astonishment,
Desire illimitable, and still content,
And all dear names men use, to cheat despair,
For the perplexed and viewless streams that bear
Our hearts at random down the dark of life.
Now, ere the unthinking silence on that strife
Steals down, I would cheat drowsy Death so far,
My night shall be remembered for a star
That outshone all the suns of all men's days.

Shall I not crown them with immortal praise
Whom I have loved, who have given me, dared with me
High secrets, and in darkness knelt to see
The inenarrable ¹ godhead of delight?
Love is a flame; — we have beaconed the world's night.
A city: — and we have built it, these and I.
An emperor: — we have taught the world to die.
So, for their sakes I loved, ere I go hence,
And the high cause of Love's magnificence,
And to keep loyalties young, I'll write those names
Golden forever, eagles, crying flames,
And set them as a banner, that men may know,
To dare the generations, burn, and blow
Out on the wind of Time, shining and streaming. . . .

These I have loved:

White plates and cups, clean-gleaming,
Ringed with blue lines; and feathery, faëry dust;
Wet roofs, beneath the lamp-light; the strong crust
Of friendly bread; and many-tasting food;
Rainbows; and the blue bitter smoke of wood;
And radiant raindrops couching in cool flowers;
And flowers themselves, that sway through sunny hours,

¹ *inenarrable*: indescribable.

Dreaming of moths that drink them under the moon;
 Then, the cool kindliness of sheets, that soon
 Smooth away trouble; and the rough male kiss
 Of blankets; grainy wood; live hair that is
 Shining and free; blue-massing clouds; the keen
 Unpassioned beauty of a great machine;
 The benison of hot water; furs to touch;
 The good smell of old clothes; and other such —
 The comfortable smell of friendly fingers,
 Hair's fragrance, and the musty reek that lingers
 About dead leaves and last year's ferns. . . .

Dear names,

And thousand others throng to me! Royal flames;
 Sweet water's dimpling laugh from tap or spring;
 Holes in the ground; and voices that do sing:
 Voices in laughter, too; and body's pain,
 Soon turned to peace; and the deep-panting train;
 Firm sands; the little dulling edge of foam
 That browns and dwindles as the wave goes home;
 And washen stones, gay for an hour; the cold
 Graveness of iron; moist black earthen mold;
 Sleep; and high places; footprints in the dew;
 And oaks; and brown horse-chestnuts, glossy-new;
 And new-peeled sticks; and shining pools on grass; —
 All these have been my loves. And these shall pass,
 Whatever passes not, in the great hour,
 Nor all my passion, all my prayers, have power
 To hold them with me through the gate of Death.
 They'll play deserter, turn with the traitor breath,
 Break the high bond we made, and sell Love's trust
 And sacramental covenant to the dust.
 — Oh, never a doubt but, somewhere, I shall wake,
 And give what's left of love again, and make
 New friends now strangers. . . .

But the best I've known
 Stays here, and changes, breaks, grows old, is blown
 About the winds of the world, and fades from brains
 Of living men, and dies.

Nothing remains.

O dear my loves, O faithless, once again
This one last gift I give: that after men
Shall know, and later lovers, far-removed
Praise you, "All these were lovely"; say, "He loved."

THE SOLDIER

If I should die, think only this of me;
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is forever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

EDITH SITWELL

Edith Sitwell, daughter of Sir George and Lady Ida Sitwell, granddaughter of the Earl of Landseborough and sister of the two writers Osbert and Sacheverell, was born at Scarborough, Yorkshire, in 1887. She was educated, as she puts it, "in secrecy," and in 1914 came to London, where she has lived ever since.

In 1916, she began the editing of *Wheels*, a determinedly "modern" anthology which outraged most of the conservative critics. Her own poems provided an even greater series of shocks. After a mild and undistinguished début — *The Mother and Other Poems* (1915) — Miss Sitwell published, in a succession so speedy as to seem little less than rapid-fire: *Clowns' Houses* (1918), *The Wooden Pegasus* (1920), *Facade* (1922), *Bucolic Comedies* (1923). In these volumes — particularly in the last two — Miss Sitwell limits her gamut; but, within her range, there is no poet quite like her. Her favorite in-

strument seems to be the xylophone, and it is amazing what effects she produces from its restricted timbre; Miss Sitwell is a virtuoso in the communication of a half-wooden, half-glassy tone which is seldom without brilliance. Hers is a curious landscape in which the trees are "stag-antlered," the morning light "creaks down," the fire has a "furry warmth," the rain is a "blunt wooden stalactite," the flowers "cluck," "bird-blood" leaps within the veins, and the world itself is "like a bare egg laid by the feathered air." As a result much of Miss Sitwell's work sounds like nonsense, but it is nonsense with a point, even with a purpose. In "Aubade," for example, Miss Sitwell wants to show the "sad bucolic stupidity" of a plain girl on a country farm, neglected and "not quite bright," coming down to light the fire. Here, and elsewhere, her verse has the charming inconsequence of an inspired nursery rhyme.

The readers who were waiting for Miss Sitwell to "humanize" her hard, bright idiom were rewarded by *The Sleeping Beauty* (1924) and *Troy Park* (1926). Here, in what is obviously her finest work so far, she achieves a unity, a sustained poignance, which her other work, for all its felicities, never expressed. *Collected Poems* appeared in 1930.

INTERLUDE

Amid this hot green glowing gloom
A word falls with a raindrop's boom.

Like baskets of ripe fruit in air
The bird-songs seem, suspended where

Those goldfinches — the ripe warm lights
Peck slyly at them — take quick flights.

My feet are feathered like a bird
Among the shadows scarcely heard;

I bring you branches green with dew
And fruits that you may crown anew

Your whirring waspish-gilded hair
Amid this cornucopia —

Until your warm lips bear the stains
And bird-blood leap within your veins.

AUBADE ¹

Jane, Jane,
Tall as a crane,
The morning light creaks down again.

Comb your cockscomb-ragged hair;
Jane, Jane, come down the stair.

Each dull blunt wooden stalactite
Of rain creaks, hardened by the light,

Sounding like an overtone
From some lonely world unknown.

But the creaking empty light
Will never harden into sight,

Will never penetrate your brain
With overtones like the blunt rain.

The light would show (if it could harden)
Eternities of kitchen-garden,

Cockscomb flowers that none will pluck,
And wooden flowers that 'gin to cluck.

In the kitchen you must light
Flames as staring, red and white

As carrots or as turnips, shining
Where the cold dawn light lies whining.

¹ *Aubade*: morning song.

Cockscomb hair on the cold wind
Hangs limp, turns the milk's weak mind. . . .

Jane, Jane,
Tall as a crane,
The morning light creaks down again!

SOLO FOR EAR-TRUMPET

The carriage brushes through the bright
Leaves (violent jets from life to light).
Strong polished speed is plunging, heaves
Between the showers of bright hot leaves.
The window-glasses glaze our faces
And jar them to the very bases, —
But they could never put a polish
Upon my manners, or abolish
My most distinct disinclination
For calling on a rich relation!
In her house, — bulwark built between
The life man lives and visions seen, —
The sunlight hiccups white as chalk,
Grown drunk with emptiness of talk,
And silence hisses like a snake,
Invertebrate and rattling ache. . . .

Till suddenly, Eternity
Drowns all the houses like a sea,
And down the street the Trump of Doom
Blares, — barely shakes this drawing-room,
Where raw-edged shadows sting forlorn
As dank dark nettles. Down the horn
Of her ear-trumpet I convey
The news that: "It is Judgment Day!"
"Speak louder; I don't catch, my dear!"
I roared: "*It is the Trump we hear!*"
"The *What?*" — "The TRUMP!" . . .
"I shall complain —
Those boy-scouts practicing again!"

THE OLD NURSE'S SONG

Ptolemy, poor Ptolemy,
In a dusty room doth lie —
Beggars for his bedfellows,
Pence upon his eye.
The old men spend his money,
The nursemaids eat his honey —
But no one knows at all, my dear,
Where Ptolemy doth lie.

The moon, a milk-white unicorn,
She chased me round the town:
She chased me up — and chased me down —
She whistled through her horn:
"Go and listen at the keyhole
When the cold wind blows —
It's Ptolemy, poor Ptolemy,
A-snoring through his nose."

W. J. TURNER

Walter James (Redfern) Turner was born in Melbourne, Australia, in 1889. He was educated at Scotch College, Melbourne, and, at seventeen, made the long journey to Europe. He studied in Germany and, shortly afterward, went to England, where he has lived ever since. His activities have been numerous. He was literary editor of *The Daily Herald*, dramatic critic of *The London Mercury*, and is, at present, musical critic for three English weeklies.

But it is as a poet that Turner first aroused — and still challenges — attention. *The Hunter and Other Poems* (1916) contains much worth attention besides the whimsical "Romance," which has been so much quoted. *The Dark Fire* (1918) sounds greater depths; a repressed passion adds a somber note to the bright fancies. Turner's later volumes, *Paris and Helen* (1921), *In Time Like Glass* (1921), *Landscape of Cythrea* (1923), and *Jack and Jill* (1934), suffer from an overproductive and uncritical ease, but there are fresh ideas and admirable parts in all of them.

Turner's *Mozart: The Man and His Works* (1938) was bailed as the best biography and most penetrating interpretation of the musician yet written.

ROMANCE

When I was but thirteen or so
I went into a gold land.
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Took me by the hand.

My father died, my brother too,
They passed like fleeting dreams,
I stood where Popocatpetl
In the sunlight gleams.

I dimly heard the master's voice
And boys far-off at play, —
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Had stolen me away.

I walked in a great golden dream
To and fro from school —
Shining Popocatpetl
The dusty streets did rule.

I walked home with a gold dark boy
And never a word I'd say,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Had taken my speech away.

I gazed entranced upon his face
Fairer than any flower —
O shining Popocatpetl
It was thy magic hour:

The houses, people, traffic seemed
Thin fading dreams by day;
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi,
They had stolen my soul away!

SONG

Lovely hill-torrents are
At cold winterfall;
Among the earth's silence, they
Stonily call.

Gone Autumn's pageantry;
Through woods all bare
With strange, locked voices
Shining they stare!

IRENE RUTHERFORD MCLEOD

Irene Rutherford McLeod, born August 21, 1891, has written three volumes of direct and vigorous verse, the best of which may be found in *Songs to Save a Soul* (1915) and *Before Dawn* (1918).

LONE DOG

I'm a lean dog, a keen dog, a wild dog, and lone;
I'm a rough dog, a tough dog, hunting on my own;
I'm a bad dog, a mad dog, teasing silly sheep;
I love to sit and bay the moon, to keep fat souls from sleep.

I'll never be a lap dog, licking dirty feet,
A sleek dog, a meek dog, cringing for my meat,
Not for me the fireside, the well-filled plate,
But shut door, and sharp stone, and cuff and kick and hate.

Not for me the other dogs, running by my side,
Some have run a short while, but none of them would bide.
O mine is still the lone trail, the hard trail, the best,
Wide wind, and wild stars, and hunger of the quest!

Richard Aldington was born in Hampshire in 1892, and educated at Dover College and London University. His first poems were published in 1909; *Images Old and New* appeared in 1915. Aldington, H. D., Amy Lowell, and John Gould Fletcher are considered the finest of the Imagist poets; their sensitive, firm, and clean-cut lines put to shame their imitators. Aldington's *War and Love* (1918) and *Exile and Other Poems* (1923) are somewhat more regular in pattern, more humanized in warmth.

Aldington's first novel, *Death of a Hero* (1929), was written in fifty-two days. This panoramic novel, which deals with three English generations, was followed by several others, the best of which are *Roads to Glory* (1931) and *All Men are Enemies* (1933). A collected *Poems of Richard Aldington* was published in 1934; *The Crystal World* (1938) is a small book of delicate love poems.

IMAGES

I

Like a gondola of green scented fruits
Drifting along the dank canals of Venice,
You, O exquisite one,
Have entered into my desolate city.

II

The blue smoke leaps
Like swirling clouds of birds vanishing.
So my love leaps forth toward you,
Vanishes and is renewed.

III

A rose-yellow moon in a pale sky
When the sunset is faint vermillion
In the mist among the tree-boughs
Art thou to me, my beloved.

IV

A young beech tree on the edge of the forest
Stands still in the evening,
Yet shudders through all its leaves in the light air
And seems to fear the stars —
So are you still and so tremble.

V

The red deer are high on the mountain,
They are beyond the last pine trees.
And my desires have run with them.

VI

The flower which the wind has shaken
Is soon filled again with rain;
So does my heart fill slowly with tears,
O Foam-Driver, Wind-of-the-Vineyards,
Until you return.

ALL LOVELY THINGS

Hide from me all lovely things
Whether of skies or starry flowers;
Let me not see the grace of women
Nor look in children's eyes.

Give me things harsh and cruel
In a grim derelict land,
For these can only kill,
While beauty tortures alive.

WILFRED OWEN

Wilfred Owen was born at Oswestry March 18, 1893, was educated at the Birkenhead Institute, matriculated at London University in 1910, and obtained a private tutorship in 1913 near Bordeaux. In

1915, in spite of delicate health, he joined the Artist's Rifles, served in France from 1916 to June, 1917, when he was invalided home. Fourteen months later, he returned to the Western Front, was awarded the Military Cross for gallantry in October, and was killed — with tragic irony — a week before the armistice, on November 4, 1918, while trying to get his men across the Sombre Canal.

Owen's name was unknown to the world until his friend Siegfried Sassoon unearthed his posthumous *Poems* (1920), to which Sassoon wrote the introduction. It was evident at once that here was one of the most important contributions to the literature of the War, expressed by a poet whose courage was only surpassed by his integrity. The restrained passion as well as the pitiful outcries in Owen's poetry have a spiritual kinship with Sassoon's stark verses. They reflect that stage of the war when the easy patriotics have a sardonic sound on the battlefield. "He never," writes Sassoon, "wrote his poems (as so many war-poets did) to make the effect of a personal gesture. He pitied others; he did not pity himself." An enlarged *Poems of Wilfred Owen* (1931) emphasized the authenticity and even nobility of these poems, even though they are not concerned with the usual subject-matter of poetry. The subject is war, as Owen declared, "war and the pity of war. The poetry is in the pity."

Although Owen's work was unknown during his lifetime, it has been repeatedly "discovered," especially by the post-war poets. Critics have ranked him among the finest spirits of his time.

ANTHEM FOR DOOMED YOUTH

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.
No mockeries for them; no prayers nor bells,
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs, —
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmers of good-bys.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

APOLOGIA PRO POEMATE MEO

I, too, saw God through mud —

The mud that cracked on cheeks when wretches smiled.
War brought more glory to their eyes than blood,
And gave their laughs more glee than shakes a child.

Merry it was to laugh there —

Where death becomes absurd and life absurder.
For power was on us as we slashed bones bare
Not to feel sickness or remorse of murder.

I, too, have dropped off fear —

Behind the barrage, dead as my platoon,
And sailed my spirit surging, light and clear,
Past the entanglement where hopes lay strewn;

And witnessed exultation —

Faces that used to curse me, scowl for scowl,
Shine and lift up with passion of oblation,
Seraphic for an hour, though they were foul.

I have made fellowships —

Untold of happy lovers in old song.
For love is not the binding of fair lips
With the soft silk of eyes that look and long,

By Joy, whose ribbon slips —

But wound with war's hard wire whose stakes are
strong;
Bound with the bandage of the arm that drips;
Knit in the welding of the rifle-thong.

I have perceived much beauty

In the hoarse oaths that kept our courage straight;
Heard music in the silentness of duty;
Found peace where shell-storms spouted reddest spate.

Nevertheless, except you share
With them in hell the sorrowful dark of hell,
Whose world is but the trembling of a flare,
And heaven but as the highway for a shell,

You shall not hear their mirth:
You shall not come to think them well content
By any jest of mine. These men are worth
Your tears: You are not worth their merriment.

SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER

Sylvia Townsend Warner was born at Harrow-on-the-Hill, December, 1893. A writer of extremely sensitive verse, she was unknown until the publication of her fantastic novel, *Lolly Willowses, or The Passionate Huntsman* (1926). Her volume of poetry, *The Espalier* (1925), had already prepared few readers for work of a particularly distinguished kind. There is not a mediocre sentiment nor a slipshod line in this volume, whether Miss Warner is writing in the broad bucolic vein or fashioning epitaphs which reveal her as a master of condensation. This concentrated quality is again manifest in the delightfully acrid *Mr. Fortune's Maggot* (1927), in *The Salutation* (1932), and the verses in *Time Importuned* (1928), from which the following have been taken. *Summer Will Show* (1936) is serious and searching.

COUNTRY THOUGHT

Idbury bells are ringing
And Westcote has just begun,
And down in the valley
Ring the bells of Bledington.

To hear all the church-bells
Ring-ringing together,
Chiming so pleasantly
As if nothing were the matter,

The notion might come
To some religious thinker

That The Lord God Almighty
Is a traveling tinker,

Who travels through England
From north to south,
And sits him at the roadside
With a pipe in his mouth,

A-tinkling and a-tinkering
To mend up the souls
That week-day wickedness
Has worn into holes.

And yet there is not
One tinker, but Three —
One at Westcote, One at Bledington
And One at Idbury.

THREE EPITAPHS

I, an unwedded wandering dame,
For quiet into the country came:
Here, hailed it; but did not foretell
I'd stay so long and rest so well.

*

I, Richard Kent, beneath these stones,
Sheltered my old and trembling bones;
But my best manhood, quick and brave,
Lies buried in another grave.

*

Her grieving parents cradled here
Ann Monk, a gracious child and dear.
Lord, let this epitaph suffice:
Early to Bed and Early to Rise.

ELIZABETH

"Elizabeth the Beloved" —
So much says the stone
That is all with weather defaced,
With moss overgrown.

But if to husband or child,
Brother or sire, most dear
Is past deciphering.
This only is clear:

That once she was beloved,
Was Elizabeth,
And is now beloved no longer,
If it be not of Death.

CHARLES HAMILTON SORLEY

Charles Hamilton Sorley, who promised great things, was born at Old Aberdeen May 15, 1895. He studied at Marlborough College and University College, Oxford. He was finishing his studies abroad and was on a walking-tour along the banks of the Moselle when the war came. Sorley returned home to receive a commission in the 7th Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment. In August, 1915, at the age of twenty, he was made a captain. On October 13, 1915, he was killed in action near Hulluch.

Sorley left but one book, *Marlborough and Other Poems*. The verse contained in it is sometimes rough but never rude. Tolerance and a dignity unusual for a boy of twenty, distinguish his poetry. There is scarcely a line, from the restrained sonnets to the buoyant "Song of the Ungirt Runners," which is not vivid and deeply felt.

TWO SONNETS

I

Saints have adored the lofty soul of you.
Poets have whitened at your high renown.

We stand among the many millions who
Do hourly wait to pass your pathway down.
You, so familiar, once were strange: we tried
To live as of your presence unaware.
But now in every road on every side
We see your straight and steadfast signpost there.

I think it like the signpost in my land
Hoary and tall, which pointed me to go
Upward, into the hills, on the right hand,
Where the mists swim and the winds shriek and blow,
A homeless land and friendless, but a land
I did not know and that I wished to know.

II

Such, such is death: no triumph: no defeat:
Only an empty pail, a slate rubbed clean,
A merciful putting away of what has been.
And this we know: Death is not Life effete,
Life crushed, the broken pail. We who have seen
So marvelous things know well the end not yet.
Victor and vanquished are a-one in death:
Coward and brave: friend, foe. Ghosts do not say,
"Come, what was your record when you drew breath?"
But a big blot has hid each yesterday
So poor, so manifestly incomplete.
And your bright Promise, withered long and sped,
Is touched; stirs, rises, opens and grows sweet
And blossoms and is you, when you are dead.

THE SONG OF THE UNGIRT RUNNERS

We swing ungirded hips,
And lightened are our eyes,
The rain is on our lips,
We do not run for prize.

We know not whom we trust
Nor whitherward we fare,
But we run because we must
Through the great wide air.

The waters of the seas
Are troubled as by storm.
The tempest strips the trees
And does not leave them warm.
Does the tearing tempest pause?
Do the tree tops ask it why?
So we run without a cause
'Neath the big bare sky.

The rain is on our lips,
We do not run for prize.
But the storm the water whips
And the wave howls to the skies.
The winds arise and strike it
And scatter it like sand,
And we run because we like it
Through the broad bright land.

ROBERT GRAVES

Robert (Ranke) Graves was born in England of mixed Irish, Scottish, and German stock, July 26, 1895. He was educated at Charterhouse and Oxford, after which he joined the British Expeditionary Force and served three times in France, in the same regiment as Siegfried Sassoon. Like Sassoon, Graves reacts against the storm of fury and blood-lust, but, fortified by a lighter and more whimsical spirit, where Sassoon is violent, Graves is volatile; where Sassoon is bitter, Graves is almost blithe. An infectious gayety rises from *Fairies and Fusiliers* (1917); in *Country Sentiment* (1919) Graves turns to a more serious simplicity. A nimble fancy ripples beneath the most archaic of his ballads, and a quaintly original turn of mind saves them from sentimentality.

The Pier Glass (1921) and *Whipperginny* (1923) are less emotional, more experimental. *Country Sentiment* was, so Graves says, "an

endeavor to escape from a painful war neurosis into an Arcadia of amatory fancy. But the prevailing mood of *The Pier Glass* is aggressive and disciplinary rather than escapist." *Whipperginny*, like the succeeding *Mock Beggar Hall* (1924), is conscious, almost self-conscious, philosophizing mixed with fantasy. *Collected Poems*, containing more determinedly intellectual verse, was published in 1927.

In his forties Graves turned toward prose. *I, Claudius* (1934), a fictionalized biography of the Roman Emperor, was followed by *Claudius the God*.

IT'S A QUEER TIME

It's hard to know if you're alive or dead
When steel and fire go roaring through your head.

One moment you'll be crouching at your gun
Traversing, mowing heaps down half in fun:
The next, you choke and clutch at your right breast —
No time to think — leave all — and off you go . . .
To Treasure Island where the Spice winds blow,
To lovely groves of mango, quince, and lime —
Breathe no good-by, but ho, for the Red West!
It's a queer time.

You're charging madly at them yelling "Fag! "
When somehow something gives and your feet drag.
You fall and strike your head; yet feel no pain
And find . . . you're digging tunnels through the hay
In the Big Barn, 'cause it's a rainy day.
Oh, springy hay, and lovely beams to climb!
You're back in the old sailor suit again.
It's a queer time.

Or you'll be dozing safe in your dug-out —
A great roar — the trench shakes and falls about —
You're struggling, gasping, struggling, then . . . *hullo!*
Elsie comes tripping gaily down the trench,
Hanky to nose — that lyddite makes a stench —
Getting her pinafore all over grime.
Funny! because she died ten years ago!
It's a queer time.

The trouble is, things happen much too quick;
Up jump the Boches, rifles thump and click,
You stagger, and the whole scene fades away:
Even good Christians don't like passing straight
From Tipperary or their Hymn of Hate
To Alleluiah-chanting, and the chime
Of golden harps . . . and . . . I'm not well today . . .
It's a queer time.

NEGLECTFUL EDWARD

Nancy

Edward, back from the Indian Sea,
"What have you brought for Nancy?"

Edward

"A rope of pearls and a gold earring,
And a bird of the East that will not sing.
A carven tooth, a box with a key —"

Nancy

"God be praised you are back," says she,
"Have you nothing more for your Nancy?"

Edward

"Long as I sailed the Indian Sea
I gathered all for your fancy:
Toys and silk and jewels I bring,
And a bird of the East that will not sing:
What more can you want, dear girl, from me?"

Nancy

"God be praised you are back," said she,
"Have you nothing better for Nancy?"

Edward

"Safe and home from the Indian Sea,
And nothing to take your fancy?"

Nancy

"You can keep your pearls and your gold earring,
And your bird of the East that will not sing,
But, Ned, have you nothing more for me
Than heathenish gew-gaw toys?" says she,
"Have you nothing better for Nancy?"

LOST LOVE

His eyes are quickened so with grief,
He can watch a grass or leaf
Every instant grow; he can
Clearly through a flint wall see,
Or watch the startled spirit flee
From the throat of a dead man:
Across two counties he can hear,
And catch your words before you speak,
The woodlouse or the maggot's weak
Clamor rings in his sad ear;
And noise so slight it would surpass
Credence: — drinking sound of grass,
Worm-talk, clashing jaws of moth
Chumbling holes in cloth:
The groan of ants who undertake
Gigantic loads for honor's sake,
Their sinews creak, their breath comes thin:
Whir of spiders when they spin,
And minute, whispering, mumbling, sighs
Of idle grubs and flies.
This man is quickened so with grief,
He wanders god-like or like thief
Inside and out, below, above,
Without relief seeking lost love.

Leonard A. G. Strong was born March 8, 1896 in Devon. After graduating from Wadham College, Oxford, he taught at Summer Fields, a famous preparatory school. Although his first books were books of verse Strong became known as a successful novelist both in America and England. *Selected Poems* appeared in 1935.

As a poet Strong's reputation rests on his lyrics which summon the spirit of the English countryside, sometimes in the local dialect, sometimes in suggestive descriptions of the landscape.

A MOMENT

The winter afternoon
Is clear and still,
And Time sits thinking
On this frozen hill.

Stand high upon the rocks,
Take horn and blow.
Far out across the moor
The long notes go.

Pure, unassailable
And cold they fly,
Like silver javelins
Against the sky.

The rabbit suddenly
Attentive sits,
No stir about him but
His little wits.

Her hunger all forgot,
A speckled bird
Ponders with head on side
What she has heard.

OLD DAN'L

Out of his cottage to the sun
Bent double comes old Dan'l,
His chest all over cotton wool,
His back all over flannel.

"Winter will finish him," they've said
Each winter now for ten:
But come the first warm day of Spring
Old Dan'l's out again.

EPITAPH ON A SENTRY

The snare of sleep held fast his struggling will.
They found him — and he now may sleep his fill.

LOUIS MACNEICE

Louis MacNeice was born September 12, 1907, in the north of Ireland. He was educated at Merton College, Oxford, became a professor of classics in London, and was one of the group known as the "post-war poets."

His first volume, *Blind Fireworks* (1929), showed talent and some originality, but it was not until the publication of *Poems* (1937) that MacNeice revealed his characteristic idiom. His is a speech which mingles the prosaic and the exalted, which turns from a contemplation of the past to a "modernistic" interpretation of nature, particularly in its mechanical phases. In this vigorous poetry observation is often expressed in irony — "Sunday Morning" records the mood and its details.

SUNDAY MORNING

Down the road someone is practicing scales,
The notes like little fishes vanish with a wink of tails,
Man's heart expands to tinker with his car
For this is Sunday morning, Fate's great bazaar.
Regard these means as ends, concentrate on this Now,

And you may grow to music or drive beyond Hindhead any-
how,
Take corners on two wheels until you go so fast
That you can clutch a fringe or two of the windy past,
That you can abstract this day and make it to the week of
time
A small eternity, a sonnet self-contained in rhyme.

But listen, up the road, something gulps; the church spire
Opens its eight bells out, skulls' mouths which will not tire
To tell how there is no music or movement which secures
Escape from the weekday time. Which deadens and endures.

STEPHEN SPENDER

Stephen Spender was born February 28, 1909, near London. The son of a famous journalist, he was first interested in painting; at seventeen he supported himself by printing chemists' labels. He attended University College, Oxford, left without taking his degree, but formed a friendship with Louis MacNeice and other young poets who composed the post-war group a few years later. At eighteen he printed on his own press *Nine Experiments* (1928), in which his unique phrasing was already apparent.

Poems (1933) shows Spender as one of the most forceful exponents of social forces and the machine age. To him the rose is less romantic, even less real, than the railroad train; "The Express" glides from the station "after the first powerful manifesto, the black statement of pistons," more majestic than any queen, and she goes on her journey wrapped "in music no bird-song, nor bough breaking with honey buds, shall ever equal." His images are startling and sometimes obscure, but they are compelled by an ardent imagination and by a great passion for humanity, for "the palpable and obvious love of man."

Spender's "Not Palaces" discloses the intensity of his imagination and his social vision. Here an eager nature declares itself in lines which are a call to youth, a call to understand and co-operate with the vast changes now taking place. It is too late, he says, to dream of fairy palaces or moon over the past with its outworn caste system ("family pride") and remnants of old-world traditions of prettiness: "beauty's filtered dusts." We must live vitally, drawing our energy

as from an electric battery, the symbol of the age. All our faculties must enter into the new world: eye, that quick-darting "gazelle," ear which "suspends the spirit," touch — all the faculties must contribute toward a greater humanity where men shall not be starved and exploited, but where Man, "bringing light to life," shall be his greater self.

Trial of a Judge (1938) is a dramatic allegory based on actual outrages committed by the German Nazis; it is a passionate condemnation of all dictatorships expressed in deeply moving scenes.

NOT PALACES

Not palaces, an era's crown
Where the mind dreams, intrigues, rests;
The architectural gold-leaved flower
From people ordered like a single mind,
I build. This only what I tell:
It is too late for rare accumulation,
For family pride, for beauty's filtered dusts;
I say, stamping the words with emphasis,
Drink from here energy and only energy,
As from the electric charge of a battery,
To will this time's change.
Eye, gazelle, delicate wanderer,
Drinker of horizon's fluid line;
Ear that suspends on a chord
The spirit drinking timelessness;
Touch, love — all senses —
Leave your gardens, your singing feasts,
Your dreams of suns circling before our sun,
Of heaven after our world.
Instead, watch images of flashing brass
That strike the outward sense, the polished will,
Flag of our purpose which the wind engraves.
No spirit seek here rest. But this: No man
Shall hunger; Man shall spend equally.
Our goal which we compel: Man shall be man.

The program of the antique Satan
Bristling with guns on the indented page,

With battleship towering from hilly waves:
For what? Drive of a ruining purpose,
Destroying all but its age-long exploiters.
Our program like this, yet opposite,
Death to the killers, bringing light to life.

YOU THAT WERE

You that were constant April,
Received me for five days
With April skies always —
Five clear bells from a steeple.

And when you laughed, your laughter
Was like the quick cascade
The sun sheds on a cloud,
With its faint shadow after.

And when you frowned, your frowning
Was knit as light as these
Slight showers that shake the trees,
And flash across the morning.

I THINK CONTINUALLY OF THOSE

I think continually of those who were truly great.
Who, from the womb, remembered the soul's history
Through corridors of light where the hours are suns,
Endless and singing. Whose lovely ambition
Was that their lips, still touched with fire,
Should tell of the spirit clothed from head to foot in song.
And who hoarded from the spring branches
The desires falling across their bodies like blossoms.

What is precious is never to forget
The delight of the blood drawn from ageless springs
Breaking through rocks in worlds before our earth;
Never to deny its pleasure in the simple morning light

Nor its grave evening demand for love;
Never to allow gradually the traffic to smother
With noise and fog the flowering of the spirit.

Near the snow, near the sun, in the highest fields
See how these names are fêted by the waving grass,
And by the streamers of white cloud,
And whispers of wind in the listening sky;
The names of those who in their lives fought for life,
Who wore at their hearts the fire's center.
Born of the sun they traveled a short while towards the sun,
And left the vivid air signed with their honor.

TOWARD FURTHER ENJOYMENT

(Some Suggestions for Study)

There are various ways of reading and enjoying this book. The volume may be read haphazardly, without any particular program, for the different kinds of pleasure different people find in different kinds of poetry. It may be examined in more detail as a picture of a period, for an understanding of ideas and tastes. It may be used for a comparison of outstanding individual poets — the prefaces and introductory prose notes will be a help toward this end. It may be studied for the rise and fall of certain tendencies, for the growth of a new spirit, and an appreciation of what modern poetry has come to be — the chronological arrangement of the volume makes such a study easy. The book may be read for its differences in outlook, tradition, and backgrounds — the division into two parts, American and British, helps define the similarities and contrasts.

Whatever way this book may be used, its object is to increase enjoyment. It is not enough to read the written word; to enjoy a poem we must appreciate its quality, and be able to interpret it. The following sections have been prepared to further the understanding, emphasize the poet's purpose, and, thus, intensify the pleasure of the poems themselves.

It must be borne in mind that these sections are suggestive, not final; they indicate the direction group study may take and suggest many other studies and groupings which the reader can make for himself. From this volume, from any other anthology, it is possible to select and rearrange poems under such headings as:

Green Things Growing
The Sea
Little Things
Comes the Spring
The Smiling Muse
Noah's Ark
The Trumpets Blow

Youth and Age
The Everlasting Hills
Birds of Many Feathers
Told at Twilight
Songs for the Seasons
Hearts and Flowers
All Sorts of People

To simplify the approach, these suggestions for study have been divided into two main parts. The first part is informal; it rearranges the poems according to theme. The second part is somewhat more formal, and places the emphasis on pattern and treatment. Thus Part One gives an indication of the ideas, the subjects, and the range of poetry, while Part Two offers material for the study of form and structure. The two parts are intended to complement each other.

PART ONE: THEMES OF MODERN POETRY

1. RE-CREATING A POEM

Every poem is made and remade countless times. It is created when the poet first composes it; it is re-created every time it is read. Before we can appreciate any poem we must know how to read it. And before we read it, we must learn to look for certain values. Whether the poem is a long narrative or a short lyric, a solemn meditation or a brisk jingle, we should remember a few things about poetry itself.

1. *Poetry is concentrated thought.* A poem says much in little; therefore, we must try to comprehend that concentration. We should read slowly, not slurring over the syllables; we must focus our attention on the thought, not hurrying past the idea.

2. *Poetry is a kind of word-music.* A poem has a tune of its own; therefore, we must echo that melody. In reading aloud we should be careful not to spoil the music by using a high-pitched tone or a sing-song voice. Follow the beat naturally; give it full value, but do not force it.

3. *Poetry expresses all the senses.* A poem communicates feelings as well as thoughts by the poet's choice of words; therefore, we must listen with all our faculties. We should listen for the characteristic and changing sounds as well as for the descriptive and unusual words; we should look for the arresting phrase and the illuminating image; we should feel the power of fresh epithets and old allusions; we should smell the perfume and taste the flavor carried by the words themselves.

4. *Poetry answers our demand for rhythm.* A poem "beats"

time simply and strongly; therefore, we need only respond to it with our own "human" rhythm. Whether or not we are poets, we are all rhythmical by nature; we breathe, walk, run, sing, cheer, dance, even work in rhythm. From the beginning, our lives are accompanied by rhythm: swung on the mother's arm or rocked in the cradle to a lullaby. The very elements about us obey the laws of rhythm: the planets, the seasons, the tides, night and day, the huge and infinitesimal motions of the universe are as regular as the human pulse. The poet "shapes" this rhythm, and the reader enjoys the beat of the lines because they satisfy a deep-seated rhythmic impulse. Therefore, we should follow the rhythm as we follow the movements in a dance.

5. *Poetry is observation plus imagination.* A poem is the result of something seen or felt intensified by images, suggestions, and wonder; therefore, we must read it with a wideawake mind and all our imaginative ability. The poet has written under the spell of emotional and intellectual excitement. He has been seized by some mood or the force of some incident, and there has been conceived in him this living thing, this order out of chaos — a poem. The reader should react to this intense creation. He should share as much of the emotion as possible. He should sense not only the *meaning* of the poem, but its suggestions and implications.

Let us test these observations by re-creating Edna St. Vincent Millay's "Renascence" (p. 222), one of the most imaginative and widely read of modern poems. Let us read it with our powers of concentration and music-making, with the inborn sense of rhythm, most of all with imagination.

The poem begins with concentrated power. Casually, in the tones of ordinary speech, yet in the simplest possible rhythm, the poet establishes the scene and its background. The reader sees the details of the Maine coast in the opening lines:

All I could see from where I stood
Was three long mountains and a wood;
I turned and looked another way,
And saw three islands in a bay.

The poem's beat and tone are thus established; the lines proceed as innocently as a child's counting-out rhyme. The rhythm is so definite, the speech so direct, that an intimate and immediate contact between the reader and the poet is achieved.

So with my eyes I traced the line
 Of the horizon, thin and fine,
 Straight around till I was come
 Back to where I'd started from;
 And all I saw from where I stood
 Was three long mountains and a wood.

Thus the very simplicity, the "tone of speech," has vividly reflected not only the landscape seen by the poet, but the mood evoked by it. As one reads further the contact grows closer; the reader yields more and more to the spell of the words. Familiar details take on larger significance. The actual scene is so surcharged with emotion that it becomes *more* than real and is lifted to the plane of the spiritual.

I saw and heard, and knew at last
 The How and Why of all things, past,
 And present, and forevermore.
 The universe, cleft to the core,
 Lay open to my probing sense. . . .

Lying there upon the grass, the young poet is in such close touch with the sky, the mountains, and Infinity, that what started to be a rhymed record of a scene becomes a vision of immensities. The small and the large are one; the poet becomes part of the earth itself, suffers all its pangs, is pierced by every twisting root. The very epithets — "*envious thrust*," "*brooded wrong*," "*heavy night*" — emphasize the emotion.

. . . Mine was the weight
 Of every brooded wrong, the hate
 That stood behind each envious thrust;
 Mine every greed, mine every lust.

She sees a man starving in Capri — and starves with him. She sees two ships strike together in a great fog-bank, hears a thousand screams smite the heavens — "and every scream tore through my throat." As the poem proceeds, we realize she is sharing not only the anguish of earth but all its growths and joys. As though she herself were deep in the ground, she feels each penetrating drop of rain, every searching sunbeam. She prays to be restored to finite existence, to the little things of everyday. And suddenly she feels:

The grass, a-tip-toe at my ear . . .
 I felt the rain's cool finger-tips
 Brushed tenderly across my lips . . .
 And all at once the heavy night
 Fell from my eyes and I could see —
 A drenched and dripping apple-tree . . .

She has found an answer to the overpowering immensities.
 From now on she is vibrantly identified with all that lives and
 struggles and grows about her.

O God, I cried, no dark disguise
 Can e'er hereafter hide from me
 Thy radiant identity!
 Thou canst not move across the grass
 But my quick eyes will see Thee pass,
 Nor speak, however silently,
 But my hushed voice will answer Thee . . .
 God, I can push the grass apart
 And lay my finger on Thy heart!

So the poem draws to its close, mounting ever higher with a quiet but convincing certainty. And the reader mounts with it. The poet's identification of all of life has been shared, apprehended, completed. *And it is the reader who has made the final completion.* By means so simple and yet so subtle that he is hardly aware of it, the reader has ceased being merely a reader and has become the chief actor in the poem — has become, during the taking-on of this intense emotional experience, the poet herself.

It may be interesting to re-create other poems in a similar manner. Read G. K. Chesterton's "Lepanto" (p. 352) and listen to the different effects. Consult an encyclopedia or history for an account of the famous naval battle of Lepanto on October 7, 1571, when the allied Christian powers broke the domination of the Turks. This battle has an added historical importance because it was the last great encounter between fleets of galleys and also because it was the last of the Crusades.

Find passages in the poem which show (a) the period, (b) the gathering of the Christian allies, (c) the summoning of the evil spirits by Mahound (or Mohammed), god of the Turks, (d) the battle as seen by the Pope, (e) the meditation of Cervantes, author of *Don Quixote*, who fought in this battle and smiled, "but not as Sultans smile," at the end of the last Crusade.

Note how the contrasts in sound are established at the very beginning. The false peace of the East is suggested in:

White founts falling in the Courts of the Sun —

The gathering of the aroused Christians is hinted in the alliteration of:

Dim drums throbbing, in the hills half heard —

It increases with the stronger music of:

Strong gongs groaning as the guns boom far —

Finally it breaks out in full force with:

Torchlight crimson on the copper kettle-drums,
Then the tuckets, then the trumpets, then the cannon, and he
comes!

The choice of words adds sharpness to the meaning as well as to the music. Elizabeth is "the *cold* queen of England" because she refused to take part in the expedition; the daring Don John of Austria is the "*crownless* prince" risen from "a *doubtful* seat" because he was the illegitimate brother of King Philip of Spain; the Christian captives are "*sunk* and *sunless*" because they are slaves, chained to their oars in the dark holds of the Turkish galleys.

Find other descriptive words and phrases. Trace the progress of the poem — the ominous and quiet laughter, the mounting excitement, the full blast of battle, the final victory — and show how the words themselves cause the changes in speed and intensity.

Compare the *sound* of this poem with the sound of Vachel Lindsay's "The Congo." What similarities can you find? Why are both poems sometimes called *chants*?

Try re-creating some of the other poems in the manner suggested in this chapter. Study the progress of the idea and emotion in:

Robert Frost's "The Death of the Hired Man," p. 115

John Masfield's "Rounding the Horn," p. 361

Joaquin Miller's "Columbus," p. 48

Harold Monro's "Every Thing," p. 370

2. INCREASING THE POWER OF A STORY

What does poetry do that prose cannot do? Why tell a story in verse when prose is so effective?

There is no question about the effectiveness of prose as a story-telling medium; but there are times when prose is not effective enough. Poetry increases the power of a story by sharpness of phrase, condensed vigor, skill of repetition, music of rhyme — most of all, by the gathering strength of the rhythm.

If we were to re-tell "Danny Deever" in prose, we would say that two soldiers were talking over a crime committed by one of their fellows: Danny Deever quarreled with his comrade and shot him while asleep. One of the speakers, nicknamed "Files-on-Parade," a term which shows he is an ordinary private, is timid and sympathetic; the other, the "Color-Sergeant" who has charge of the flags, is older, more experienced and "hard-boiled." The two soldiers watch the regiment form ceremonially ("in 'ollow square") while the disgraced Danny Deever is stripped of his military insignia — "they've taken of his buttons off an' cut his stripes away." Then, after the slow roll of drums, the band strikes up a lively air ("the quick step"), and the hanging is over.

Now read "Danny Deever" (p. 319) as told by Rudyard Kipling. Note how the accent of the verse gives an immediate sense of drama. The tension is increased by the device of repetition, by varied questions and answers, by the insistent beat of the rhythm. The suspense is heightened as the color-sergeant's grim humor and the clipped phrases give us the story little by little. Thus a story has been told more vividly and more swiftly because poetry has been employed to tell it; and, because of the way in which it has been told, two different characters — two types of humanity — have been memorably revealed.

Notice the power of suggestion, the condensation, the strong rhythm, and the forceful way of telling a story in Kipling's other narrative poems. Read "Gunga Din" (p. 314), "The Return" (p. 317), and "Tommy" (p. 320). Notice how skilfully the tale is told and how subtly the background is introduced. The three poems give us not only a picture of three different personalities, but three condensed life-histories. Which poem says the most in the least space? Which is the most powerful?

Which character is the most likable? Why? Which details are the most suggestive or significant?

With these effects in mind, try to be aware of similar effects in other story-poems. Read "Jim Bludso" (p. 43), "The Glory Trail" (p. 157), and "Jesse James" (p. 182). These three are Western tales, rapid in pace and keen in rhythm. In "The Glory Trail" notice how poetry paints the picture in such descriptive bits as "*thankful chops*," "*high-chinned Bob*," "*mav'rick-hungry rope*," for a lasso that roped "mavericks," unbranded cattle. Can you find similar expressive details in the other poems?

Which phrases in "Jim Bludso" indicate the period? Which make the background clear? Why does the author call "Jesse James" a "Design in Red and Yellow for a Nickel Library"? Have you ever read a "dime novel"? What was the outstanding feature? You probably know that Jesse James was a famous American outlaw who, according to legend, robbed the rich and protected the poor. Can you name his counterpart in Old England? What else have the two in common?

William Rose Benét, the author of "Jesse James," also wrote "Merchants from Cathay." Read the latter poem (p. 179) and compare it with the former. Which is the more realistic? The more colorful? The more skilfully treated? Which sticks in your memory? Why?

Read carefully the following story-poems:

"Jim" by Bret Harte, p. 45

"A Lady Comes to an Inn" by Elizabeth Coatsworth, p. 235

"The Listeners" by Walter de la Mare, p. 347

"The Rear-Guard" by Siegfried Sassoon, p. 394

Compare these poems for sharpness of phrase and effectiveness in story-telling. Note the characteristic "tone" in each—broadly humorous in the first, seemingly direct but highly suggestive in the second, mysterious in the third, dramatically realistic in the fourth. In "Jim" the story is told simply, but the "point" is left until the last stanza. What would be lost if this story had been told in prose? What makes the humor "broad" rather than "sly"? Does the end come as a surprise?

In the second and third poems the stories are *suggested* rather than fully told. What is gained by this method? What does the

reader have to supply, and why is this stimulating? Putting the imagination to work, what do we learn from "A Lady Comes to an Inn"? Are we affected most by (a) curiosity? (b) terror? (c) beauty? (d) wonder? What would so lovely and delicate a woman be doing in so strange a place? Why had she chosen three such curious companions? Could you write a story showing how it all came about?

"The Listeners" is more definitely in the realm of the fantastic. Why has the rider come? What gives the poem its undercurrent of challenge and heroism? Are the "listeners" behind the door real people or ghosts — or is nobody there? Is "The Listeners" in any sense symbolic? Does the rider possibly represent Man faced with the great Unknown? Could you furnish this poem with a "plot"?

"The Rear-Guard" actually happened to Siegfried Sassoon. What gives this poem its (a) realism? (b) sense of weariness? (c) feeling of horror? Were you prepared for the climax? What makes you know the scene is an underground trench? How is the soldier "unloading hell behind him step by step"?

Read "The Stone" by W. W. Gibson (p. 364). Here is a tense narrative which is fully explained by the speaker. This poem derives its power not merely from the tale, but from the way in which it is told, from its repetitions, and its very deliberate summing up of detail. Which is the more clearly drawn: the stone-cutter or the woman who orders the stone to be cut? Notice how the story plunges at once into the very center of the tale. Is this an advantage? Could you reduce the theme of the poem to a short paragraph? Would such repetitions as the following be effective in prose?

And as she waited patiently,
I could not bear to feel
Those still, gray eyes that followed me,
Those eyes that plucked the breath from me,
And curdled the warm blood in me,
Those eyes that cut me to the bone,
And pierced my marrow like cold steel.

Select poems from some other collection which are also stories in verse. What seem to you the advantages of telling a story in verse instead of in prose? Name one or more poems of the past

which are founded on fact — such as “The Charge of the Light Brigade” or “Paul Revere’s Ride.” What has been gained by putting these tales in poetic form?

Now take a prose story — either a historic event, a short story by your favorite author, or an incident from the newspaper — and try telling it in verse. If you know any of the old ballads, you might model your version upon one of them.

3. LIVING PORTRAITS

The carefully chosen word, the echo of rhyme, the strong pulse of rhythm — all the effects which heighten the story-telling power of verse — are also used to build characters in poetry. So intensely does poetry individualize personalities that the art may be said to be an endless gallery of living portraits. Such modern poets as Frost, Robinson, Hardy, and Kipling — to say nothing of such masters as Shakespeare and Browning — were at their best when they were depicting men and women.

Read Robert Frost’s “The Death of the Hired Man” (p. 115). Notice how three individuals *live* in these lines. Observe the passages which reveal the character of (a) the wife, (b) the husband, (c) the worn-out hired man. Note that, though the hired man never speaks, never even appears, he is realized more fully than the other two characters. Which is the most sympathetic figure of the three? Which is (a) the most realistic passage? (b) the most fanciful? (c) the tenderest? Which part do you consider the most memorable? Why? Do the two definitions of “home” shed any light on the attitudes of the two speakers? In what way? This poem could be acted out as a dramatic dialogue. Let the two speakers be seen and the third speaker (a “chorus”) deliver the description, if possible, unseen.

Read Ralph Hodgson’s “Eve” (p. 342). This treatment of the Biblical story is new and surprising. The tone of the poem is utterly unlike anything ever used for this subject; it is whimsical yet sad, childlike yet convincing. Most of all it presents a new picture of “poor motherless Eve” tempted and betrayed by the wily, wicked serpent who promises the simple girl wisdom if she will only eat the forbidden fruit. The Garden of Eden becomes a small country-garden, and Eve’s punishment leaves her “crying outside in the lane” like a child who has done

something wrong without realizing it. By what means has the poet accomplished this? What lines indicate (a) Eve's simplicity? (b) the country setting? (c) the sympathy of the animals? What has this poem in common with "Time, You Old Gypsy Man" by the same author?

Reread Kipling's "Gunga Din" (p. 314) and his "Tommy" (p. 320). In "Gunga Din" the military setting is at once suggested by the emphasis on the beat and the drum-like repetitions. Beneath the sound of the lines two characters are revealed. Here, again, the one who does not speak is the central figure, seen through the eyes of the speaker. Who is the more heroic, the English soldier or the native water-carrier? Try to give an account of the same battle and the same situation from the standpoint of Gunga Din.

"Tommy Atkins" is the nickname for the common English soldier, just as "Jack Tar" is the name by which a sailor is known. In "Tommy" an ordinary soldier speaks his mind. Do you understand his point of view? Do you agree with it? What makes his indignation so timely? Compare this soldier with the one in "Gunga Din" — or do you think he may be the same soldier?

Read five or six of the following poems:

- "Columbus" by Joaquin Miller, p. 48
- "An Old Story" by E. A. Robinson, p. 81
- "Miniver Cheevy" by E. A. Robinson, p. 81
- "The Eagle that is Forgotten" by Vachel Lindsay, p. 136
- "Martin" by Joyce Kilmer, p. 198
- "The Ballad of Father Gilligan" by W. B. Yeats, p. 311
- "To an Athlete Dying Young" by A. E. Housman, p. 306
- "Old Susan" by Walter de la Mare, p. 348
- "Aubade" by Edith Sitwell, p. 403
- "A Satire of Circumstance" by Thomas Hardy, p. 283
- "The Old Woman" by Joseph Campbell, p. 381
- "Neglectful Edward" by Robert Graves, p. 418
- "Lucinda Matlock" by Edgar Lee Masters, p. 85
- "No Envy, John Carter" by Merrill Moore, p. 253
- "For A Certain Atheist" by Sara Henderson Hay, p. 257

Each of these poems centers about a person. Two of the subjects were real people, the others are fictitious, but the poets have given reality to all of them. Some are heroic, some are cowardly, some are pitiful, some are foolish, some are saintly, and some

are base. Can you "sort" them? Which is your favorite? Why? Which gives you a sense of the *poet's* personality as well as his subject's? Which character seems (a) the most vivid? (b) the most moving? (c) the most heroic? (d) the most legendary? (e) the most laughable? (f) the most lovable? (g) the most pathetic? How has the poet made you "see" the people he is portraying?

Read Robert Frost's "An Old Man's Winter Night" (p. 121). Besides the picture of an old man in the country — a complete contrast to the young "Eve" — this poem presents a living background. What are the chief characteristics? Which phrases suggest the sense of age in (a) the man? (b) the house? What line is the most poignant and revealing? Try to furnish details telling more about this man's life. Take a character in one of the other poems and tell what may have happened to him or her *before* the time of the poem — in other words, give an account which might explain the character and why he acted as described in the poem.

Read four other portrait poems:

"Richard Cory" by E. A. Robinson, p. 81

"Portrait of a Boy" by Stephen Vincent Benét, p. 239

"The Plower" by Padraic Colum, p. 379

"Lone Dog" by Irene Rutherford McLeod, p. 407

The four characters in these poems are four entirely different types. Compare them, contrasting the language, setting, and point of view. Observe how in the first poem the tragedy is told without explaining why it occurred; the reader's imagination must supply the reason. In the second the boy's thoughts and his reading are shown by the kind of dream into which he escapes from reality. In the third the figure of the laborer, etched against the sunset, is magnified into something symbolic; he becomes one with the savage earth and the old Gaelic gods. In the fourth the "lone dog" is a footloose wanderer, a lover of the trail and highway; the reader will be quick to see the relation between this expression and the poems in Group 5: *Songs for the Open Road*.

What are the dominating traits described in these four poems? By what means does the poet emphasize them? Looking over the other poems listed in this section, which character seems

the most interesting? If you could meet any of these people in actual life, which would you prefer to know? Explain your choice. Who is your favorite character (a) in fiction? (b) in poetry? (c) in drama? (d) in history? What are the ideals or the leading motives they symbolize? Some of the chief persons in older poetry are the Ancient Mariner, Hiawatha, Lochinvar, Robin Hood, King Arthur, Barbara Frietchie, Ulysses, the Pied Piper. Do you recognize any of these, and can you tell why you remember them?

4. HEART OF NATURE

Next to stories and portraits of people, poems about nature have always been most popular. Poets have made the reader see "the new in the familiar" with the magic of an unexpected phrase, the twist of a sentence, the very turn of a rhyme. Notice how the following poems present fairly familiar scenes, and yet, because of the treatment, we look at the world, into the very heart of nature, as though we were seeing something new.

- "Miracles" by Walt Whitman, p. 33
- "What is the Grass?" by Walt Whitman, p. 27
- "Chartless" by Emily Dickinson, p. 38
- "Indian Summer" by Emily Dickinson, p. 39
- "The Marshes of Glynn" by Sidney Lanier, p. 52
- "Spicewood" by Lizette Woodworth Reese, p. 66
- "Daisies" by Bliss Carman, p. 70
- "Trees" by Joyce Kilmer, p. 197
- "Pear Tree" by H. D., p. 192
- "Spring Night" by Sara Teasdale, p. 160
- "Water Lillies" by Sara Teasdale, p. 162
- "Blue-Butterfly Day" by Robert Frost, p. 112

All these are by modern American poets; they offer a striking contrast to the nature poetry of the immediate past. Great though the famous New England poets were, they were inclined to decorate their pastoral verses with "lessons" and often ended their descriptive poems with a heavy — and usually irrelevant — Moral. (For examples see Holmes' "The Chambered Nautilus," Emerson's "The Rhodora," and Bryant's "To a Waterfowl.") Today most poets avoid adding "moralizing" to their landscapes. Yet some of the poems listed above contain certain "lessons." Can you name the poems and can

you say what they teach? Can you select two poems which are wholly descriptive? Which poem, because of its choice of words, appeals to you because of its (a) imagination? (b) music? (c) familiarity? (d) strangeness? (e) emotion? Point out some particularly vivid phrases.

Poetry has been defined as "the power to make the familiar seem strange and the strange seem familiar." Illustrate this by referring to:

- "A Flower of Mullein" by Lizette Woodworth Reese, p. 66
- "Nothing Gold Can Stay" by Robert Frost, p. 122
- "The Tuft of Flowers" by Robert Frost, p. 109
- "Grass" by Carl Sandburg, p. 125
- "Days Too Short" by W. H. Davies, p. 334
- "In the Wood of Finvara" by Arthur Symonds, p. 308
- "Every Thing" by Harold Monroe, p. 370
- "Silver" by Walter de la Mare, p. 346
- "There Blooms No Bud in May" by Walter de la Mare, p. 349

How have the poets made the familiar things seem fresh and strange? What images or phrases make you realize the "glory of the commonplace"? Which poem seems the most (a) "artless"? (b) skilfully made? (c) simple? (d) difficult? (e) deepest? Which poem would be the one you would wish to memorize?

Read Frost's "Birches" (p. 112). This has been called "a bucolic lyric in blank verse." Do you understand why? Is the emphasis on the description or on the philosophy? What is the central thought? A critic has said that "Birches" is "an extraordinary mingling of realism and imagination." Can you show where the realism leaves off and the imagination begins?

Look up the *origin* of "pastoral" and "bucolic." What have the two words in common? Can you see why they have been applied to poets who write about simple country scenes and "green things growing"? Name two "pastoral" or "bucolic" poets of the past.

5. SONGS FOR THE OPEN ROAD

There comes a time when even the most stay-at-home heart and the most sophisticated city-dweller feels the call of the outdoors, the rolling hills, and the blue sea. It is then we respond to the cry of "Over the hills and far away!" We take to the open

road — and if we cannot do so in fact, we can do it in fancy, in the songs of the poets.

In carefree verse, the poets give us the happiness of "a shadowy highway cool and brown, alluring up and enticing down"; with Vachel Lindsay we sing:

I want to go wandering. Who shall declare
I will regret if I dare?

And we echo Gerald Gould, who exclaims:

I know not where the white road runs, nor what the blue hills are;
But a man can have the sun for a friend, and for his guide a star.

Read the following poems:

- "A Vagabond Song" by Bliss Carman, p. 69
- "Hem and Haw" by Bliss Carman, p. 69
- "Daisies" by Bliss Carman, p. 70
- "At the Crossroads" by Richard Hovey, p. 71
- "Unmanifest Destiny" by Richard Hovey, p. 73
- "A Stein Song" by Richard Hovey, p. 74
- "The Sea" by A. C. Swinburne, p. 279
- "Sea-Fever" by John Masefield, p. 359
- "Laugh and Be Merry" by John Masefield, p. 360
- "Lone Dog" by Irene Rutherford McLeod, p. 407
- "Racing the Rain" by Sara Henderson Hay, p. 257

In these poems the vagabond spirit is expressed in many different ways. Which gives the greatest sense of "the roving foot"? In which is the wanderlust pictured most (a) graphically? (b) tunefully? (c) inspiringly?

Richard Hovey and Bliss Carman together wrote three volumes of *Songs from Vagabondia*. Reading their poems can you tell why they enjoyed their partnership? Compare their poems with "Sea-Fever" (p. 359) and other poems by John Masefield not in this volume, such as "A Wanderer's Song," "Tewkesbury Road," and "The West Wind." Here is the fresh spirit of "the flung spray and the blown spume," the "proud music of the hills," and the woodland trail which lights "a fire in our heels." Using the rhythm of one of these poems can you write some verses about "Along the Highway" or "Where the City Ends" or "With a Knapsack on My Back" or "Beyond the Horizon" or "Goodbye to the Town"?

Read the biographical note about Masefield (p. 357) and see

how far Masfield lived out his theory of freedom. Does a poet have to experience the things he writes about? Which would you say is the more important for a writer: experience or insight? observation or imagination?

Read "Romance" (p. 406) by W. J. Turner. Although this is not a poem about actual wandering, what do these lines have in common with the others listed in this section? The poet, when a boy, has fallen in love with far-off places. Is it the spell of the words, the romantic sound of the curious syllables, which awakes his longing and sends him dreaming about a land he has never seen and a comrade he has never known? Is it some other association? Have words in themselves ever given you a similar feeling?

6. THE HUMAN CRY

Years ago Coleridge wrote:

He liveth best who loveth best
All things both great and small.

Love is the deepest of emotions, and love of humanity is one which has stirred the poets, especially in this age. The poets have championed the cause of the dreamers, the under-dogs, "the maimed and the halt"; they have listened to the cry of brotherhood and voiced the ideals of democracy in many ways.

Some of the older poems on this theme are Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "The Cry of the Children," Thomas Hood's "The Song of the Shirt," and Robert Burns' "A Man's A Man for A' That." Even this small volume contains various expressions of the hopes of ordinary humanity. Read the following poems:

- "A Consecration" by John Masfield, p. 358
- "The Man with the Hoe" by Edwin Markham, p. 61
- "Brotherhood" by Edwin Markham, p. 60
- "Not Palaces" by Stephen Spender, p. 423
- "On the Birth of a Child" by Louis Untermeyer, p. 175
- "Factories" by Margaret Widdemer, p. 212

These are poems which are protests, but which voice hope and faith in justice. Contrast what Masfield and Markham say about "man the worker." Select the lines which show that Masfield identifies himself with the laborers, with the poor and unsung, rather than with the famous and powerful.

"In the figure of one man with a hoe Markham drew a picture of men in the mines, men in the sweatshops, men working everywhere without joy, without hope. To social consciousness he added social conscience." Explain this. Markham's poem is not a protest against toil, but against exploitation and drudgery; he contrasts all that is wonderful in the universe with cruelty, ignorance, and darkness. Can you find lines which show (a) how hopeless the toiler is? (b) what he looks like? (c) what great things he cannot comprehend? (d) the protest which mankind is voicing? How is this poem related to "Brotherhood"?

Compare "Not Palaces" and "On the Birth of a Child." In spite of the differences in style is there a similarity in thought? What is the central idea of each? What, according to the poet, is the new generation to do?

Read Untermeyer's "Caliban in the Coal Mines" (p. 174) and Widdemer's "Factories" (p. 212). Both are poems of modern industry. Here, again, it is not labor which is considered an evil, but the conditions under which the labor is done. Why has the author chosen to call the coal-miner "Caliban"? (See Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Act I, Scene ii.) What has this poem in common with "The Man with the Hoe"? What lines express the most powerful simile? the most unusual image? What lines arouse your sympathy? What effect is given by the repetition in "Factories"? What is meant by the second lines in each stanza and why are they enclosed in parentheses?

Of all the poems listed in this section which is (a) the most quickly appealing? (b) the most deeply inspiring? (c) the most difficult to understand at first reading? (d) the one you are likely to remember longest?

7. "I HEAR AMERICA SINGING"

Young though it is, no country has ever expressed itself more variously than America. Every section of the land, every regional background, every profession and trade has been celebrated in prose and verse. The great range of subject-matter and native utterance has occurred in our own times, but three generations ago Walt Whitman glorified the pioneering spirit in the New World.

Read Whitman's "I Hear America Singing" (p. 26), "From 'Crossing Brooklyn Ferry'" (p. 32), and the section from "Song of Myself" on page 30 beginning "I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journeywork of the stars."

What do these three poems have in common? In what way do they differ from most of the other poems you have read? Are they easier or harder to grasp than the others? "Whitman may be called the champion of the democratic ideal not so much because of his free form but because of his liberating spirit." Do these selections seem to bear this out? If so, point out what may be broad in outlook and "liberating in spirit." In what lines is the poet local and, at the same time, universal?

America has often been called the "melting-pot of the nations." Explain the phrase. Show some contribution in verse or prose, music or language, by a foreign group. Read T. A. Daly's "The Song of the Thrush" (p. 89) and "Mia Carlotta" (p. 89). The first is an expression of homesickness in "Irish-American," the second is a humorous love poem in "Italian-American." Does the dialect seem natural? What makes the lines flow so easily, like well-phrased speech? Is the poet ridiculing foreign-born citizens or is he sympathetic to them?

Do you know "Leetle Bateese" or any of the "French-Canadian" poems by W. H. Drummond? Do you remember any other poems in dialect? Do they show we are "all brothers under the skin"? Try to write a poem, either serious or humorous, in dialect.

Read

"The Turning of the Babies in the Bed" by Paul L. Dunbar, p. 92

"A Coquette Conquered" by Paul L. Dunbar, p. 93

"Homesick Blues" by Langston Hughes, p. 247

"Brass Spittoons" by Langston Hughes, p. 247

"From the Dark Tower" by Countee Cullen, p. 249

What have these five poems in common? What is the difference in tone between the poems by Dunbar and those by Hughes and Cullen? The Negro has been used as a theme by white and colored poets; some of the poems are comic, some are tragic. "Dunbar studied the Negro objectively and presented him as he found him." Do these two poems by Dunbar prove or disprove that statement? Is it true of Hughes and Cullen? Which

poem is the most indignant? In which does a passion for beauty dominate? Read the introductory note to the poems by Hughes on page 246. The poet maintains that "the mood of the *Blues* is almost always despondency, but when they are sung people laugh." Why is this? Have you ever heard any *Blues* played or sung? What was the effect? What phrase in "Homesick Blues" is particularly poetic? What section of Carl Sandburg's "Jazz Fantasia" (p. 129) is meant to suggest the "blues"?

Read the following by Paul Laurence Dunbar from his *Collected Poems*: "Fishin'," "Candle Lightin' Time," "Howdy, Honey, Howdy," "O Lil Lamb," "Lullaby," "Mandy Lou," "Noon," "Angelina," "Song of Summer," "Discovered," "The Boogah Man," "An Ante-Bellum Sermon."

These poems present various aspects of the life of the ante-bellum Negro. Select a poem by Dunbar which shows the plantation Negro's (a) religious side, (b) humorous expression, (c) gift of song, (d) love of nature, (e) sense of the dramatic.

As a contrast, read "The Congo" on page 138. This is a poem written by one who is not a Negro, but who was strongly affected by Negro rhythms and who was often called "the jazz poet." The pictures in this poem are not realistic, but wholly fantastic. Can you see why many Negroes consider this poem "misrepresentative"? Do the lines show how "Lindsay was influenced by the colorful suggestions, the superstitions, the revivalistic gusto and, above all, by the syncopated music that characterizes the Negro in America"? What idea does this poem give you of Negro characteristics? Which seems the more vital element: the idea of the poem, or the way in which the idea is expressed? Is "The Congo" in essence a religious or merely a vigorously orchestral poem? Select the phrases that indicate a deep religious feeling. What makes you realize that the picture presented is characteristic of only a small part of the Negroes in America?

Dialect poems have also been written about the pioneers, the old settlers, cowboys, lumberjacks, and "hill-billies." Perhaps you could sing or recite one of these, such as "Git Along, Little Dogies." James Whitcomb Riley was especially appealing when he wrote about the uneducated toiler or sentimental farmhand. Read his "When the Frost is on the Punkin'" (p. 56) for another aspect of American life. This poetic insight into the

nature of simple things always awakens interest. City-dwellers take a certain pride because they have been brought up on the artificial conveniences of a town, but the country boy often wins because he has been accustomed to the uncompromising struggle with nature. Or do you disagree? Do you know any other poems which treat of the same type of character, or different type with the same background? What other poems by James Whitcomb Riley do you know? What is their charm?

8. FROM KITCHEN AND HEARTH

Women have written on every theme attempted by men, but they have been especially successful as "laureates of the home." They, more than men, can appreciate the saying:

Man works from sun to sun,
But women's work is never done.

Housekeeping may often be drudgery, but imagination is a powerful aid, and the most menial task may be uplifted. Love of man and love of God transforms labor; as the seventh-century English poet, George Herbert wrote:

Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,
Makes that and the action fine.

This theme is elaborated in "The Monk in the Kitchen" by Anna Hempstead Branch (p. 98) and "Autumn" by Jean Starr Untermeyer (p. 195). Read the two poems, paying close attention to the details. In "The Monk in the Kitchen," which lines seem to glorify humble, home-keeping acts? What points of similarity can you find between the central thought of this poem ("Whoever makes a thing more bright, He is an angel of all light") and the conclusion of Langston Hughes's "Brass Spit-toons"?

In "Autumn" the kitchen is made even more glamorous. Watch the changes in tone in this poem; observe how it begins in a purely descriptive manner but ends in a tensely emotional key. How is this accomplished? Why is the blend of whimsical observation and ecstasy so effective? Note the power and exactness of epithet in such a phrase as "How memory *cuts* away the years." Can you find other instances? Do you know (or would

you care to write) another poem which takes some ordinary detail of housekeeping and makes something almost noble out of it? Try reading both poems to your mother, or some other experienced housekeeper. Read them also to some careless housekeeper, if you happen to know one. Try to get opinions from both.

Read the following poems of hearth and home, all of which were written by women of our day:

"Mrs. Winkelsteiner" by Dorothy E. Reid, p. 244

"Domestic Economy" by Anna Wickham, p. 386

"For Lot's Wife" by Sara Henderson Hay, p. 451

These three poems are all lyrical expressions which any woman — and even some men — will appreciate. The first reminds us that certain people, certain races, are happy because they sing while they work. What is particularly affecting in these verses? Does the light tone detract from or add to the underlying pathos? What kind of workers or what nationalities sing as they work? Do you know any "sea chantys" or "spirituals"?

What is similar in "Domestic Economy" and "For Lot's Wife"? Do you know the Biblical story which the poet is re-interpreting? Can you sympathize with Lot's wife and understand why she *had* to look back?

What have "Domestic Economy" and "The Monk in the Kitchen" in common? How is the central idea of each expressed? The author, a modern Englishwoman with a passion for order, is distressed because there is no time or place in this world for perfection. Is this idea made clear in her "Envoi" (which means a "message" or "last word") and even in "The Singer"? Which one of her four poems on pages 386 to 387 has the most meaning for you?

9. "WHEN THE GUNS BEGIN"

During a period of warfare there is always a literature which glorifies bloodshed, whips up enthusiasm for killing, and celebrates the "splendor of sacrifice" — a son of Mussolini wrote of the "thrill and beauty" of bombing defenseless towns from the air. But when the war is over almost all the literature is anti-war. This is the war literature that survives; it remains in the grim records of Barbusse's *Under Fire*, Cummings' *The*

Enormous Room, Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, and Zweig's *The Case of Sergeant Grischa*. These volumes are in prose, but their message is concentrated in the lines of many soldier-poets, particularly Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen.

Read the following poems:

- "The Dug-Out" by Siegfried Sassoon, p. 393
- "Dreamers" by Siegfried Sassoon, p. 394
- "The Rear-Guard" by Siegfried Sassoon, p. 394
- "Does it Matter?" by Siegfried Sassoon, p. 395
- "Base Details" by Siegfried Sassoon, p. 395
- "Aftermath" by Siegfried Sassoon, p. 396

This is the point of view expressed by most of the soldier-poets who saw service at the front. Why may it also be the expression of the civilian in the next war? Which poems make the deepest impression — those of irony, or those of horror? Which poem affects you the most? "Aftermath" summarizes Sassoon's work and the post-war feeling of a great part of the world. Can you express that feeling in a paragraph? Which lines look forward hopefully to the future?

Now read:

- "I Have a Rendezvous with Death" by Alan Seeger, p. 206
- "In Flanders Fields" by John McCrae, p. 345
- "The Soldier" by Rupert Brooke, p. 401

These poems are a decided contrast to the lines by Sassoon. Which attitudes do you prefer? Compare "In Flanders Fields" with "Aftermath." What are (a) the essential qualities of each poem? (b) the essential differences? Which shows the results of greater war experience?

What have the lines by Seeger and Brooke in common? Read Brooke's "The Great Lover" (p. 399) and "Sonnet" (p. 398), also (from his *Collected Poems*) "Grantchester," "Clouds," "Heaven," "The Hill." What seems to be Brooke's outstanding quality? Do you get a sense of his tastes, temperament, character, and personality? Do you understand why the poet Edward Thomas said, "He was part of the youth of the world"? Do you think Brooke's enthusiasm would have outlasted the war had he lived?

As a further contrast read:

"On a Soldier Fallen in the Philippines" by William V. Moody, p. 75

"Anthem for Doomed Youth" by Wilfred Owen, p. 410

"Apologia pro Poemate Meo" by Wilfred Owen, p. 411

"It's a Queer Time" by Robert Graves, p. 417

Moody's poem was written in 1897 during the Spanish-American war; the others were written in 1915-16. What, if anything, have the first three poems in common? Although Owen's protest against war is quieter than Sassoon's, is it less passionate? What passages show the depth of his feeling? What does the Latin title mean? Why "*Anthem for Doomed Youth*"? Do you regard it cowardly or brave of the poet to speak out against war? Read the prose paragraphs on page 410. Does this make Owen's attitude clearer? What do you think he hoped to accomplish? How would such an attitude be considered today in a country prepared to go to war?

How does Graves's poem differ from the others? Remembering all the poems discussed in this section, which ones would you choose to illustrate (a) unreserved patriotism? (b) hatred of the enemy? (c) humor in the face of death? (d) terrifying realism? (e) tragic pathos? (f) criticism of the results of war? (g) bitter irony? (h) noble vision?

10. WISDOM IN WIT

Poets have sounded the deepest and most serious feelings of humanity; yet poetry is by no means confined to what is solemn. "Life is real, life is earnest," but life is also adventurous and light-hearted, sometimes even comic and absurd. All these moods have been put to verse. Often the mood is frivolous and irresponsible — the next section will show how far the poets have gone in that direction. More frequently humor has been employed with a purpose — and this section will be devoted to light and nimble verse which is pointed, clever and satirical.

Read:

"When I Was One-and-Twenty" by A. E. Housman, p. 307

"Autumn Valentine" by Dorothy Parker, p. 237

"The Ballad of the *Billycock*" by A. C. Deane, p. 329

"The Gray Squirrel" by Humbert Wolfe, p. 389

"Solo for Ear-Trumpet" by Edith Sitwell, p. 404

"Does it Matter?" by Siegfried Sassoon, p. 395

These poems are humorous, but are they *merely* funny? Satire is a kind of humor which criticizes; it exposes some trait or fashion or makes fun of some human weakness. Which poem seems to be the most severe in criticism? Which is the gentlest in satire? Which is the most memorable for its turn of phrase? Is there any similarity between "When I Was One-and-Twenty" and "Autumn Valentine"? If so, how would you express it?

Read "Damming the Missouri" by Arthur Guiterman (p. 91). Is this a satire? If so, at what is the author poking fun?

Read "Those Two Boys" by Franklin P. Adams (p. 147). What is the effect of these verses? Did you expect them to turn out as they did? Does the end help or spoil the "moral"? Compare these lines with others by the same author in his *The Melancholy Lute*.

Read "The Sycophantic Fox and The Gullible Raven" by Guy Wetmore Carryl (p. 94). Notice the gayety of the rhythm and the rollicking rhymes. Is there anything more to these verses? Can you find any criticism in the story, which is a "fable for the frivolous"?

Read "Pigeon English" by Sara Henderson Hay (p. 256). Which is most winning: (a) the picture of the "pompous-bosomed bird"? (b) the clever choice of words to describe the sound the pigeons make? (c) the implied critical comparisons between certain kinds of birds and men?

There is wisdom in the poems listed in this section, even though it is uttered casually or off-handedly. See if you can find satire or wisdom as well as wit in the following amusing modern poems:

ON HYGIENE

Of old when folk lay sick and sorely tried,
The doctors gave them physic, and they died.
But here's a happier age: for now we know
Both how to make men sick and keep them so.

Hilaire Belloc

MARCO POLO

Marco Polo travelled far;
Went through perils worse than war;
Saw great marvels, distant lands,
Unicorns, and sarabands.

Why and wherefore? So that when
 He had toiled back home again,
 He could sing an endless solo
 Or the deeds of Marco Polo!

Clarence Day

THANKS

Only the wholesomest foods you eat;
 You wash and you wash from your head to your feet;
 The earth is not steadier on its axis
 Than you in the matter of prophylaxis;
 You go to bed early, and early you rise;
 You scrub your teeth and you scour your eyes —
 What thanks do you get for it all? Nephritis,
 Pneumonia, appendicitis,
 Renal calculus and gastritis.

Samuel Hoffenstein

MOTTO

This is the motto women heed
 Whenever they deal with men:
 If at first you don't succeed
 Cry, cry again.

Anonymous

TWO EPITAPHS

Doctor

Dust to dust,
 Seed to flower,
 A grain and a quarter
 Every hour.

Wailer

By and by
 God caught his eye.
David McCord

FLAGS

They say that courage is a flag
 Flown high. Perhaps they're right.
 But I am glad to know they add
 Flags must come down at night.

Wendy Marsh

THE JAPANESE

How courteous is the Japanese;
 He always says, "Excuse it, please."
 He climbs into his neighbor's garden,
 And smiles, and says, "I beg your pardon";
 He bows and grins a friendly grin,
 And calls his hungry family in;
 He grins, and bows a friendly bow;
 "So sorry, this my garden now."

Ogden Nash

ADVICE TO A TOT ABOUT TO LEARN THE ALPHABET

Consider, child. Be prudent.
 Rash infant, not so fast!
 Oh stay, my dimpled student,
 Unlettered to the last.
 Unless you leap before you look,
 Your fate will be a trite one.
 For first you'll learn to read a book
 And then you'll want to write one.
 The Pulitzers, the Guggenheims,
 Will rank you with the winners.
 You'll print a play, compose some rhymes,
 And be reviewed in the *Sunday Times*
 And get invited for your crimes
 To Literary Dinners.

You'll be a Guest of Honor on a hard, gold chair,
 With your name upon the menu just below the bill of fare,
 And you'll sing for your supper while the lesser authors pout,
For the Culture Clubs will get you if you don't watch out.

Phyllis McGinley

FOR LOT'S WIFE

Maybe there were curtains blowing at the casement,
 Maybe in the garden little leaves and new;
 Jars and jars of spice in a moss-cool basement,
 Maybe at the doorsill a bright flower blew.

Lintel and threshold and a hearthfire burning —
 God, that for this tending fashioned womankind,
 If You bade her leave them and never be returning,
 How could You expect her not to look behind?

Sara Henderson Hay

Compare the lines by Phyllis McGinley on page 451 with those on page 255. Which could be placed under "satire"? Which, light in tone, suggest true poetic depths?

Of the poems in this section which has the sharpest point? Which is the most comical? Which would you select as the best epigram? Which hides deep criticism in cleverness? Which would be most appreciated or disliked by (a) a man? (b) a woman? (c) a person lacking in courage? (d) a housekeeper? (e) someone brought up strictly on hygienic principles?

Compare Ogden Nash's "The Japanese" with his other poems on pages 251-252. What differences can you find in tone and manner? Which poem has the most "bite"? How is this achieved?

11. JEST JINGLES

As the preceding section indicated, poetry can not only inspire and teach, but dance and laugh; it is often as humorous as it is high-hearted. Sometimes the humor disguises a philosophy — some of the poems listed in the preceding section were condensed pieces of criticism. Frequently, however, the verse-makers enjoy sheer fun-making; they delight to wear the cap and bells, kick up their heels, and disport themselves with a joyous abandon. In this they are following an old tradition. The court-poet occasionally acted as the jester, and certain poets, remembering this, remember also that "a little nonsense now and then is relished by the best of men."

Read the following poems, which are pure jests in rhyme or, to put it differently, jest jingles:

"Seein' Things" by Eugene Field, p. 58

"Robinson Crusoe's Story" by Charles E. Carryl, p. 53

"Love Song" by Dorothy Parker, p. 236

"Men" by Dorothy E. Reid, p. 245

"The Rhinoceros" by Ogden Nash, p. 251

"Adventures of Isabel" by Ogden Nash, p. 251

"The Janitor's Boy" by Nathalia Crane, p. 260

Some of the poems listed above are "nonsense pure and simple"; some are more in the nature of stories. Which seem to be in the class of "rhymes without reason," and which might be called "laughing legends"? Have you read *Alice in Wonder-*

land? Do you find any relation between the nonsense verse in that book and "Robinson Crusoe's Story"? Does the humor of "Seein' Things" seem unreal to you, or would you say it is a genuine record of experience? Which lines in "Seein' Things" are (a) the most comic? (b) the almost realistic? (c) capable of frightening a small child? Contrast "Seein' Things" with "Jest 'fore Christmas" by the same author. What similarity do you find? Why have both poems appealed to adults as well as to children?

What theme in common has "Love Song," "Men," and "The Janitor's Boy"? Which of the three is (a) the most broadly humorous? (b) the most ironic? (c) the most charming? Which poem immediately suggests that it was written by (a) a child? (b) an experienced woman?

If you can procure a copy of Ogden Nash's *The Bad Parent's Garden of Verse*, compare the other animal poems with "The Rhinoceros" and some of the absurd narratives, such as "The Tale of Custard the Dragon," with "Adventures of Isabel." Does the absurdity of any of these poems spoil your pleasure in them or does it increase the humorous appeal? Compare them with nonsense verse by Lewis Carroll and Charles E. Carryl. Select your favorite, and explain why you have chosen it.

Read and compare:

"Neglectful Edward" by Robert Graves, p. 418

"Old Dan'l" by L. A. G. Strong, p. 421

Although these two are lightly humorous poems might they not also fit in the section entitled "Living Portraits"? Do you smile with these characters or laugh at them? What is the sentiment underneath the humor?

The following poem is, on the surface, a sentimental jingle. Notice how the punctuation, however, gives it a pointed twist. Referring to the French forms on pages 472-474, what is the form of these eight lines?

TO THE UNUSUAL HER, DEPARTING

Till you return,
The heart of me
Shall always yearn.
Till you return,

My soul shall learn
 What aches there be —
 Till you return
 The heart of me.

Morrie Ryskind

The next two verses are a combination of "reasonable fun" and unreasoning nonsense. Which do you find the more amusing? Which is closer to human experience?

THE BUMBLEBEAVER

Industrious beast, he'll never fail,
 Humming and cheerful, as he goes
 To make mud-houses with his tail
 And gather honey with his nose.

Although he flits from flower to flower,
 He's not at all a gay deceiver.
 We might take lessons by the hour
 From busy, buzzy bumblebeaver.

Kenyon Cox

SELF-SACRIFICE

Father, chancing to chastise
 His indignant daughter Sue,
 Said, "I hope you realize
 This hurts me much more than you."

Susan straightway ceased to roar.
 "If that's really true," said she,
 "I can stand a good deal more.
 Please go on — and don't mind me!"

Harry Graham

Do you find a point as well as a pun in the following lines by a well-known actor?

THE OWL

The owl is very wise;
 You see his wisdom in his eyes.
 He sleeps all day;
 He hunts all night.
 The wit to woo,
 He woos all right.

Roland Young

A favorite form of humorous verse is the limerick. This has been employed countless times by famous writers as well as unknown amateurs. Oliver Herford, the witty artist and versifier, who died in 1935, once said that his whole philosophy was expressed in this limerick which he composed in the Central Park menagerie:

Said a cheerful old bear at the zoo,
 "I never have time to feel blue.
 If it bores me, you know,
 To walk to and fro,
 I reverse it — and walk fro and to."

A somewhat trickier limerick was written recently by Morris Bishop, who, when he is not writing light verse, teaches Romance languages at Cornell University:

Said a youth convalescing in Bellevue,
 "I devised a contrivance to televue;
 But now I'm aware
 You must use it with care,
 If you want to have people think wellevue."

Edward Lear is said to have been the first consistent user, if not the inventor, of the limerick. Since his time more than a million limericks have been written; great authors have amused themselves with the form, and contests are continually being held in an effort to give the lines a new twist. The first of the following limericks is by Edward Lear; the second, by W. S. Gilbert, is a "blank verse limerick" which is a burlesque on the first limerick; the third is a famous "tongue-twister" by Carolyn Wells; the fourth and the fifth are new and anonymous.

There was an old man in a tree,
 Who was horribly bored by a bee.
 When they said, "Does it buzz?"
 He replied, "Yes, it does!
 It's a regular brute of a bee."

There was an old man of St. Bees,
 Who was stung in the arm by a wasp.
 When asked, "Does it hurt?"
 He replied, "No, it doesn't;
 But I thought all the while 'twas a hornet."

A tutor who tooted the flute
 Tried to teach two young tutors to toot.
 Said the two to the tutor,
 "Is it harder to toot, or
 To tutor two tooters to toot?"

A hungry old man from the Rhine
 Was asked at what hour he would dine.
 He replied "At eleven,
 At three, six, and seven,
 And eight, and a quarter to nine."

There was a young lady named Frances,
 Whose beaux never got any chances
 Because of the dozens
 Of uncles and cousins
 And nieces and nephews and auntses.

Do you know any other limericks? If you do, compare them with the ones in this section for humor and "point" or for pointless nonsense. Can you remember any limericks which you yourself have composed? Try to write a limerick using the following as first lines:

A freshman who hated exams . . .

A seer took a see-saw to sea . . .

There once was a cowardly giant . . .

Said a bee to a boy, "Let me by!" . . .

There are many collections which show the lighter side of poetry; one of the most comprehensive is *The Book of Humorous Verse* by Carolyn Wells.

12. WINE OF COURAGE

Man is a creature of many moods, and poetry "holds the mirror up to nature" by reflecting his loves and hates, his play and his passions. We have already seen how lively the poet can be, how carefree and irresponsible. But poetry is at its height when it carries its readers to the peaks of inspiration and the summits of joy.

Read the following poems of excitement and ecstasy:

- "From 'Song of Myself'" by Walt Whitman, p. 27
- "Joy, Shipmate, Joy!" by Walt Whitman, p. 35
- "Chartless" by Emily Dickinson, p. 38
- "Precious Words" by Emily Dickinson, p. 42
- "Columbus" by Joaquin Miller, p. 48
- "Opportunity" by Edward Rowland Sill, p. 50
- "Preparedness" by Edwin Markham, p. 63
- "At the Crossroads" by Richard Hovey, p. 71
- "Unmanifest Destiny" by Richard Hovey, p. 73
- "The Tuft of Flowers" by Robert Frost, p. 109
- "Prayers of Steel" by Carl Sandburg, p. 126
- "Let me Live out my Years" by John G. Neihardt, p. 146
- "The Slave" by James Oppenheim, p. 150
- "Prayer" by Louis Untermeyer, p. 178
- "Song and Flame" by Louis Untermeyer, p. 176
- "Renaissance" by Edna St. Vincent Millay, p. 222
- "Invictus" by W. E. Henley, p. 292
- "The Great Lover" by Rupert Brooke, p. 399

These poems express different phases of man's daring and his dreams, the conflicts of his spirit and his struggles toward the heights. Select two or more poems from this list which would be a tonic for despondency and act as "wine of courage." What particular qualities made you choose these poems? What is the central idea of each? Is the idea made more forceful by (a) the rhythm? (b) the phrases? (c) the compactness of thought?

"Renaissance" has already been considered in the first section, "Re-creating a Poem." Retrace the steps by which we are led to understand the moods of selfishness, suffering, repentance, and final triumph. Does the simplicity of form detract from or add to the dignity of the idea? Effortless though the lines seem, they are rich in imagery. Select such passages which strike you with especial force. What lines give you the keenest realization of the poet's close connection with all that breathes and struggles upward? What lines seem to be the "core" of the poem? What is the climax and the essence of the conclusion?

Compare "Invictus," "Prayer," and "Prayers of Steel." Have they a physical or spiritual connection? Which of the following might be the keynote for which poems: (a) defiance of death? (b) pride in strength? (c) courage in the face of disaster? In "Prayers of Steel" does the poet want to be "a crowbar" merely to break things down or to demolish what has been badly built?

In what way does he pray to be a "spike"? Could this poem be placed with the others in "The Human Cry"?

When it was first printed some critics found fault with "Prayer" for being an "agnostic and irreligious utterance." Does it seem so today? Is a person's faith harmed by being questioned, or is it firmer after being tested by doubt? To be happy must we be always victorious, or are we strengthened by occasional defeat?

Which poem listed in this section has the strength of (a) a sermon? (b) an epigram? (c) a sharp piece of philosophy? Does "Columbus" move you more because of its excitement than its "lesson"? Has it more value as a personal or a historical poem?

Select two or more poems from the list on page 457 which show a sympathy with man's inner struggles. Compare these with such older inspirational poems as:

- | | |
|---|--|
| "Prospice" by Robert Browning | "Say Not the Struggle Naught |
| "Ulysses" by Alfred Tennyson | Availeth" by Arthur Hugh |
| "Sir Galahad" by Alfred Tennyson | Clough |
| "The Chambered Nautilus" by Oliver Wendell Holmes | "Waiting" by John Burroughs |
| "The Bridge of Sighs" by Thomas Hood | "Finis" by Walter Savage Landor |
| "The Celestial Surgeon" by Robert Louis Stevenson | "The Old Stoic" by Emily Brontë |
| "The Best" by Elizabeth B. Browning | "The Last Word" by Matthew Arnold |
| | "Auguries of Innocence" by William Blake |

Which poem or poems would you select for your "motto"?

PART TWO: PATTERNS OF MODERN POETRY

13. THE POWER IN WORDS

Jonathan Swift said that style in writing is accomplished by "the proper words in proper places." Coleridge, critic as well as poet, made this immortal definition: "Prose: Words in their best order. Poetry: The *best* words in the best order." Scholars have repeated this in one form or another; but, no matter how much their definitions may differ in detail, all of them stress the power in words.

Novelists and essayists have strengthened their prose by choosing the exact word; but the poet finds that the choice of words is not only important but paramount. Words make the poet's verse walk slowly or march briskly, dance or stumble, fly or falter. "The best words in the best order" when put in rhythm appeal to the heart of man as directly and powerfully as the music of a band, a football cheer, a cry of joy. Since the poet writes words that are to be read aloud, strict attention must be given to every word with all its meanings and associations.

Read "The Great Lover" by Rupert Brooke (p. 399). Note the way the author uses words which are surprising but logical, exact and yet imaginative: "*unthinking* silence," "*drowsy* Death," "we have *beaconed* the world's night," "*crying* flames," "*feathery* dust," "*friendly* bread," "the blue *bitter* smoke of wood," "the cool *kindliness* of sheets," "the keen *unpassioned* beauty of a great machine," "the *benison* of hot water," "sweet water's *dimpling* laugh," "the *deep-panting* train," "the *cold* graveness of iron." Find other words or epithets (powerful words or phrases) in this poem which seem particularly forceful, strange, or effective. Explain why these words give the lines more color as well as more graphic detail.

Through the use of keen epithets the poet's lines are descriptive as well as suggestive — which is what the best of poetry should be. Robert Frost said, "It is impossible to say what poetry should or should not be, but if I were forced to attempt to define it I would say that poetry is *words which have become deeds*." Do you understand this? Does the following poem add anything to Frost's sentence?

WORDS

A word is dead when it is said,
Some say.
I say it just begins to live
That day.

Emily Dickinson

Usually the power of a word is in its *shades of meaning*; frequently, however, a word has a special significance because of its *sound*. Sometimes this sound reflects the sense; it may even

suggest the meaning: a door *bangs*, a mouse *squeaks*, a snake *hisses*, a cat *purrs* and *miaows*, the rain *taps*, dried seeds *rattle*, a duck *quacks*, bells *toll*, *tinkle* and *clang*, swords *clash*. This imitation of sound through words is called "onomatopoeia," literally "name-making."

Read "Scythe Song" by Andrew Lang (p. 287). What word or words suggest sound and meaning at the same time? What is the effect of the repetition of these words? Note the prevailing "s" sounds. This device (called "alliteration") consists in the repetition of the same letter at the beginning of two or more words in close succession — for example "bread and butter," "live, love, and learn," "a short, sharp shock." Select the phrases in "Scythe Song" which show alliteration.

Read "Spring" and "The Sea" by A. C. Swinburne (pp. 277 and 279). Select three or more examples of alliteration in either of these poems. Which are (a) the most picturesque? (b) the most effective? (c) the most artificial?

Read "The Prospect" by Thomas Hardy (p. 284). Can you find one or more examples of words which imitate sounds (onomatopoeia) in this poem? Select examples of alliteration or onomatopoeia in other poems. Explain why the poet has chosen these particular words. Can you give examples of onomatopoeia in daily speech? Can you find examples of alliteration in trade-names and newspaper advertisements?

Read "Tarantella" by Hilaire Belloc (p. 336). This poem dances with speed and gaiety. How are the sounds, the very steps of the wild measure, imitated in the lines? Which words capture (a) the sound of the accompanying guitar? (b) the graceful swaying? (c) the abrupt clapping of hands and stamping of feet?

Read "The Congo" by Vachel Lindsay (p. 138). What gives the poem as a whole its chief effect? In what way do the sounds increase the power of the meaning? Can you find lines which are particularly forceful because of the epithets? Select a passage which is particularly vivid because of (a) alliteration, (b) words as sounds, (c) colorful choice of words.

Read the following poems:

"A Mocking Bird" by Witter Bynner, p. 149

"Spring Night" by Sara Teasdale, p. 160

- "I Shall Not Care" by Sara Teasdale, p. 162
 "Velvet Shoes" by Elinor Wylie, p. 165
 "The Eagle and the Mole" by Elinor Wylie, p. 165
 "August" by Elinor Wylie, p. 168
 "Lake Song" by J. S. Untermeyer, p. 196
 "Old Age" by Maxwell Bodenheim, p. 220
 "Home-Coming" by Léonie Adams, p. 242

Select from this list three or four poems which illustrate the power of words. Which poem is rich in words that imitate sounds? Which shows the most skill in alliteration? Which has the most graphic or surprising epithets? In which do these effects present an especially imaginative picture?

14. COLOR AND IMAGE

Besides imitating sounds and intensifying ideas, poets emphasize the thought by making the reader conscious of color and image. Here observation and imagination combine to make a strong appeal to all the senses. A certain school of poets (see pp. 16-17) employed language to express the *exact* word to present new images; they were known as the Imagists.

Read the following poems which stress image and color:

- "From 'When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd'" by Walt Whitman, p. 34
 "Solitaire" by Amy Lowell, p. 103
 "A Lady" by Amy Lowell, p. 104
 "Meeting-House Hill" by Amy Lowell, p. 104
 "Night Clouds" by Amy Lowell, p. 106
 "London Nightfall" by John Gould Fletcher, p. 187
 "The Skaters" by John Gould Fletcher, p. 190
 "Oread" by H. D., p. 191
 "Heat" by H. D., p. 192
 "Pear-Tree" by H. D., p. 192
 "High Tide" by J. S. Untermeyer, p. 195
 "Images" by Richard Aldington, p. 408

What is the outstanding feature which these poems have in common? Apart from the lack of rhyme, what similarity distinguishes the first eight? Poetry appeals to all the senses, but some poems emphasize one faculty more than the others. Which two poems seem to appeal to one particular faculty? Explain your choice. Which poem seems (a) the most colorful? (b) the most exact? (c) the most brilliantly pictorial?

"Solitaire" consists of a series of pictures: streets with uneven roofs, queer Chinese gardens, strange and ruined temples, wreaths of crocuses, a field of wet grass, old-fashioned bedrooms. What is the thing which unites all these seemingly unrelated pictures? Are the pictures themselves real or fantastic? How does the poet reveal *herself* through these lines? Do you get a similar picture of her in her other poems?

Which of the three poems by H. D. presents the clearest picture? Which is the most poetic? Do these poems make you understand why the author has been called "the perfect Imagist"? In what way is her poetry like Amy Lowell's? In what way is it different?

Read "From 'Irradiations'" by John Gould Fletcher (p. 186). What lines emphasize color? What passages present the most startling images? Which section presents the most convincing picture? In which is the imagination greater than the observation? Are the lines more or less vivid than those in "Images" by Richard Aldington? Compare them with others by Fletcher.

Read for further comparison:

"Fog" by Carl Sandburg, p. 127

"Jazz Fantasia" by Carl Sandburg, p. 129

Does the suggestive picture in "Fog" remind you of the work of the Imagist poets? In what way? Is "Jazz Fantasia" appealing because of its (a) color? (b) sound? (c) pictures? Do you like or dislike jazz or "swing"? Many modern composers, such as Stravinsky, Gershwin, Grofé, and Forsythe, have treated jazz in a serious and almost classical manner. In Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" (Victor record 35822), his "Concerto for Piano and Orchestra" (Columbia records 50139 to 50141), and Forsythe's "Serenade for a Wealthy Widow" (Victor record 24852) can you detect the plaintive and colorful passages as well as the brilliant and noisy ones? Can you find such contrasts in Sandburg's poem?

Read:

"Four Cinquains" by Adelaide Crapsey, p. 134

"Interlude" by Edith Sitwell, p. 402

"Aubade" by Edith Sitwell, p. 403

"Wind in the Dusk" by Harold Monro, p. 369

In "Interlude" and "Aubade" words are used in an unusual way to achieve unusual pictures: "*staring flames*," "the dawn lies *whining*," "the cold wind hangs *limp*," "the rain *creaks*." Do you find this effective or merely affected? Does the accumulation of images increase or mar the total effect? Compare these with the images in Monro's "Wind in the Dusk." In "Four Cinquains" notice how a picture is suggested in almost every line, even when the line is only a few syllables long. Do these poems seem to gain or lose because of their brevity? Which pictures impress you most, those by Edith Sitwell, by Harold Monro, or by Adelaide Crapsey?

Read "Water," "Hay-Cock," and "I Keep Wondering" by Hilda Conkling (p. 258-9). Can you point out the words which make the pictures so precise? In what way might these poems be related to the work of Amy Lowell and the Imagists?

Compare two or more of the poems listed in this section with the following pictorial poems by older poets:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| "To Night" by Percy B. Shelley | "Ode to Autumn" by John Keats |
| "The Snow Storm" by Ralph W. Emerson | "To A Waterfowl" by W. C. Bryant |
| "Symphony in Yellow" by Oscar Wilde | "London Voluntary" by W. E. Henley |

15. ACTION AND SPEED

In Section 2 several story-poems were listed and analyzed. The poems to be considered in this section are part narrative and part description, but it is the *manner* rather than the matter which characterizes them. Most of the details and devices studied in the preceding sections are combined to give direction and speed to these poems. Poems of vigor and daring stir us because human beings respond to action. Physical activity has always delighted man; it makes him forget his cares and concerns, it rouses his spirit and quickens his blood. Often the very pace of a poem creates as great an excitement as a powerful narrative because of its stimulating vigor.

Read "The Song of the Ungirt Runners" by Charles Hamilton Sorley (p. 415). This is a swiftly paced and stirring poem. Yet there is no story in it, little description, practically no thought; it is all action. Notice how the brisk rhythm suggests the quick

breath and rapid feet of the runners. The reader cannot help but respond to the buoyant measures even though he does not know the goal of the runners. Is there a goal? Or do they run for the sheer pleasure of running? What lines are (a) the swiftest? (b) the most poetic?

Compare Sorley's poem with Browning's "How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix." Here is another poem in which speed and action are more important than the story. What is the story behind Browning's plunging verses? In the very hurried tempo does the reader have time to stop and think?

Other poems of varied speed are:

"Song of the Chattahoochee" by Sidney Lanier, p. 51

"A Stein Song" by Richard Hovey, p. 74

"Racing the Rain" by Sara Henderson Hay, p. 257

"When I Set Out for Lyonesse" by Thomas Hardy, p. 283

"L'Envoi" by Rudyard Kipling, p. 325

"Laugh and be Merry" by John Masefield, p. 360

Select two poems from those listed above and contrast them. Which moves you more because of what it says? Which stirs you more because of the way it is said? In which poem do the lines seem to (a) march steadily? (b) dance lightly? (c) gallop rapidly? Which is the most generally exciting? Can you find more poems in this or any other collection distinguished by speed and action rather than by thought or sentiment?

16. ROMANCE AND REALISM

Shortly before the Victorian era English poetry was dominated by what was known as the romantic movement. This, in turn, was followed by a swing toward "pure realism." The present tendency is to combine the best features of both movements; as a result there has developed a literature called "romantic realism." Poetry in particular has achieved a new strength and beauty. Many old-fashioned critics sighed that romance had departed from the modern mechanistic world, but, as Rudyard Kipling replied, "all unseen, Romance brought up the nine-fifteen."

Read "Old Christmas Morning" by Roy Helton (p. 204). Nothing could be more realistic than the story itself. It is the

tale of a Kentucky feud; the action is intense; the grim drama is enacted against a background of terror in an atmosphere of cold ghostliness. Yet the tale is told romantically. Although the time and setting are of today, the tone is ancient; the spirit is that of an old ballad, a faraway legend. The poem would be particularly effective if acted out as a dramatic dialog. Can you detect more than one climax in the poem? Did you anticipate the double death? Did you realize from the start that one of the speaking characters was no longer living? Compare this poem to one of the old ballads which mingles the realistic with the supernatural.

Read "The Tuft of Flowers" by Robert Frost (p. 109). Here, again, is a poem of reality: a man engaged in the familiar task of turning the grass after mowing to make hay. But the thought and treatment are romantic. The speaker begins by feeling himself alone:

"As all must be," I said within my heart,
"Whether they work together or apart."

The sight of a group of flowers ("a leaping tongue of bloom") which the mower had spared suddenly makes the speaker realize that he is no longer alone; he has felt not only the communion of labor but a kinship through beauty.

"Men work together," I told him from the heart,
"Whether they work together or apart."

In what way has an ordinary labor been glorified? How has a piece of realism become romantic? Can you find a relation between this poem and others by Robert Frost?

Read "Fog" by Carl Sandburg (p. 127), the lines beginning "The yellow fog" from "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" by T. S. Eliot (p. 209), and "Fog" by Louis Ginsberg (p. 238). Compare the treatment of the same theme by the three poets. Which is (a) the most realistic? (b) the most romantic? In which are the words used most effectively?

"Bewick Finzer" by E. A. Robinson, p. 82

"Petit, the Poet" by Edgar Lee Masters, p. 85

"Lucinda Matlock" by Edgar Lee Masters, p. 85

"Anne Rutledge" by Edgar Lee Masters, p. 86

"Mending Wall" by Robert Frost, p. 111

- "Sand Dunes" by Robert Frost, p. 120
 "Morning Song from 'Senlin,'" by Conrad Aiken, p. 216
 "How She Resolved to Act" by Merrill Moore, p. 253
 "The Song of the Old Mother" by W. B. Yeats, p. 310
 "Old Susan" by Walter de la Mare, p. 348
 "To the Four Courts, Please" by James Stephens, p. 383

All the above poems center about some simple being, common phenomenon, or actual, everyday circumstance. Select one poem which shows (a) the most realistic interpretation, (b) the most romantic conception. Which poem seems to be (a) the most tragic? (b) the most spectacular? (c) the most portrait-like? (d) the quaintest? (e) the most philosophic? (f) the most pathetic?

Read "Rounding the Horn" by John Masefield (p. 361). Apart from the story of the man who "held on" in spite of terror, is there any connection between this poem and any of the poems listed in this section? What similarity, if any, has it to Joaquin Miller's "Columbus"? Can romantic realism be, as the poet J. M. Synge implied, a blend of "beauty and brutality"? Are any of the poems you have read such a combination?

17. WHERE FANCY IS BRED

It has been said that the best of poetry is "observation plus imagination." In preceding sections we have seen how the poet adds beauty and romance to things of everyday. The greatest poems are a balance of the two tendencies, the romantic and the realistic, but poetry may swing to either extreme. When fantasy, rather than fact, is emphasized, the reader is as sharply arrested as he would be upon entering a new world. Fantasy has been defined as "the incredible mixed with the real in such fashion as to seem plausible." Fancy, as Shakespeare wrote, is bred not only in the heart but in the head, and even the usually austere Milton proved that poets delight to "trip it" as they go "on the light fantastic toe."

Read the following poems:

- "Suspense" by Emily Dickinson, p. 39
 "Inebriate of Air" by Emily Dickinson, p. 40
 "Beclouded" by Emily Dickinson, p. 40
 "Miracle" by Lizette W. Reese, p. 66
 "The Apple-Barrel of Johnny Appleseed" by Vachel Lindsay, p. 144

- "Old Manuscript" by Alfred Kreymborg, p. 154
 "Pegasus Lost" by Elinor Wylie, p. 166
 "Lady Lost" by John Crowe Ransom, p. 210
 "The End of the World" by Archibald MacLeish, p. 232
 "The Book of How" by Merrill Moore, p. 254

All these poems are more imaginative than factual; they are founded on the elements of wonder and surprise. Select (a) two which seem the most "reasonable," (b) two which are the most surprising. In which does the element of wonder predominate? Which seem sharpest in observation? Which poem suggests a sense of (a) majesty? (b) mystery? (c) almost overpowering immensity?

Compare two or more of the above listed poems, all of which are by American writers, with two or more of the following by English poets:

- "To a Snowflake" by Francis Thompson, p. 298
 "The White Cascade" by W. H. Davies, p. 334
 "Time, You Old Gypsy Man" by Ralph Hodgson, p. 340
 "Epilogue" by Alfred Noyes, p. 378
 "The Shell" by James Stephens, p. 382
 "What Thomas an Buile Said" by James Stephens, p. 384
 "Green Candles" by Humbert Wolfe, p. 390
 "Solo for Ear-Trumpet" by Edith Sitwell, p. 404
 "Country Thought" by Sylvia T. Warner, p. 412

What similarities or differences do you find between the selections by the English and American poems in this section? Apart from the complete difference in thinking, is there any similarity in theme between MacLeish's "The End of the World" and Edith Sitwell's "Solo for Ear-Trumpet"? Could either be told more effectively in prose? Let some imaginative member of the Department of Journalism or a reporter for the school paper write a prose account of the Day of Judgment as though he were an eye-witness. Then let some member of the class try to put this account into verse.

Of all the poems listed in this section which has (a) the most humor? (b) the most emotion? (c) the most picturesque appeal? If you are interested in more fantastic poems you might consult the following collections:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <i>Come Hither</i> by Walter de la Mare | <i>A Whimsy Anthology</i> by Carolyn Wells |
| <i>Collected Poems</i> by Vachel Lindsay | <i>Yesterday and Today</i> by Louis Untermeyer |

18. WORDS THAT SING

It has been shown that poetry is more powerful than prose because of its intensity and condensation — and the lyric is the most condensed of all poems. It has three chief characteristics: (1) it is personal, (2) it is usually short, (3) it must sing. This brevity and tunefulness give the lyric warmth and a quick appeal. Its nearest approach is music, that universal language, and it rouses a similar response. Note the combination of brevity, emotion and melody in the following lyrics:

- "Chartless" by Emily Dickinson, p. 38
- "Ownership" by Lizette W. Reese, p. 67
- "The Pasture" by Robert Frost, p. 109
- "Nothing Gold Can Stay" by Robert Frost, p. 122
- "Spring Night" by Sara Teasdale, p. 160
- "I Shall Not Care" by Sara Teasdale, p. 162
- "Night Song at Amalfi" by Sara Teasdale, p. 162
- "Two Songs for Solitude" by Sara Teasdale, p. 163
- "Sea Lullaby" by Elinor Wylie, p. 167
- "Bread and Music" by Conrad Aiken, p. 214
- "The Puppet Dreams" by Conrad Aiken, p. 218
- "The Anguish" by Edna St. Vincent Millay, p. 228
- "Love Song" by Dorothy Parker, p. 236

All the lyrics listed above are by American writers. Which appeals to you most because of its (a) music? (b) sense of personality? (c) beauty of picture? (d) warm emotion? (e) subtle humor? Which seems the finest combination of these elements? Usually the lyric is too swift to embody an extended thought, but it is sometimes meditative and even philosophic. Can you find one or more lyrics in which the thought predominates? What, if anything, does such a poem "teach"?

Contrast lyrics by four women: Emily Dickinson, Lizette W. Reese, Sara Teasdale, and Elinor Wylie. Refer to other lines in this volume by these poets. What are the chief similarities and differences? Which of the four would you care to study further?

Contrast Conrad Aiken's "Bread and Music" with his "The Puppet Dreams." The first is an emotional lyric, the second is a pictorial one. In the first select the lines which bring out strong personal feeling. In the second, select the lines which make the most vivid picture. Is the second poem more actual than fantastic?

Compare three or more of these American lyrics with the following melodious poems by English writers:

- "When I am Dead, My Dearest" by Christina Rossetti, p. 274
- "A Birthday" by Christina Rossetti, p. 275
- "Waiting Both" by Thomas Hardy, p. 284
- "Ode" by Arthur O'Shaughnessy, p. 289
- "Romance" by Robert Louis Stevenson, p. 295
- "Reveill  " by A. E. Housman, p. 303
- "From Far, From Eve and Morning" by A. E. Housman, p. 305
- "Loveliest of Trees" by A. E. Housman, p. 305
- "On the Idle Hill of Summer" by A. E. Housman, p. 306
- "An Old Song Resung" by W. B. Yeats, p. 310
- "When You are Old" by W. B. Yeats, p. 311
- "Sea Love" by Charlotte Mew, p. 331
- "The Moon" by W. H. Davies, p. 333

Can you see a similarity between the poems by Christina Rossetti, written eighty years ago, and the modern poems by Lizette W. Reese and Sara Teasdale? What are the chief characteristics? What relation, if any, exists between Housman's "When I Was One-and-Twenty" and Yeats's "An Old Song Resung"? What makes Housman's "Reveill  " particularly rousing? At first reading the opening stanzas of this poem seem somewhat difficult. The poet pictures dawn with its pale half-light ("the silver dusk") as a returning tide on the shores of night ("the beach of darkness"), while the sun is a golden ship. In the next verse the figure of light and darkness is continued, but the metaphor is changed. Can you explain it?

Choose from this list two other lyrics which you like. Give reasons for your choice. Do you remember any older poems which are brief, personal, and musical?

Read "The Barrel Organ" by Alfred Noyes (p. 373). What is its charm? Do you think the poem exaggerates the spell of familiar music when it refers to "a hundred thousand feet marching on to glory"? Do the repetitions increase the melody or dull the tune? Can you hear the insistent notes of a mechanical street-piano echoing through the lines? What is the chorus or "refrain"? If you would like to see how music has affected other poets, compare "The Barrel Organ" with:

- "Alexander's Feast, or The Power of Music" by John Dryden
- "Israfel" by Edgar Allan Poe
- "Concert Party" by Siegfried Sassoon

"Music" by Walter de la Mare
 "To Music, to Becalme His Fever"
 by Robert Herrick
 "The Lost Chord" by Adelaide
 Proctor

"A Toccata of Galuppi's" by
 Robert Browning
 "Orpheus with his trees" by
 William Shakespeare

Read "Love in Jeopardy" by Humbert Wolfe (p. 390). Does the oddity of phrase and picture disturb the smoothness of the lines? Is the picture something seen sharply in the sunlight of reality or something remembered from a dim dream-world? Do the slightly off-color "suspended rhymes" remind you of certain effects in modern music? Do you dislike them or have they the charm of novelty?

Which lyric in this section, either American or English, makes the most instant appeal to you? Which seems most suitable for setting to music? Which, as a song, seems to make its own music because of the singing words?

19. VERSE THAT IS FREE

Most poetry has a strong rhythmical beat, or an accompaniment of rhyme, or both. But there are many poems which are free of rhyme and rhythm and, therefore, free of the limitations of any form. Because of this, such poems are said to be written in "free verse." Many critics object to this form, claiming it is not a "form" at all since it is formless. Other critics maintain that, in freeing itself of all metrical rules and boundaries, the lines cover a greater range and speak more naturally. Still other critics insist that free verse is neither prose nor verse, but something between the two.

Read the selections by Walt Whitman on pages 26-36. Do you miss the pulse of rhythm and the accompaniment of rhyme? Does the strength of thought compensate for the lack? Do you consider these examples poetry? or prose? or a combination of the two? Though there is no regular beat in these lines, can you find what certain critics have called a "mounting music, a tidal rhythm"?

Read the following poem by a leader in the free verse movement:

I am four monkeys.
 One hangs from a limb,

tail-wise,
 chattering at the earth;
 another is cramming his belly with cocoanut;
 the third is up in the top branches,
 quizzing the sky;
 and the fourth —
 he's chasing another monkey . . .
 How many monkeys are you?

Alfred Kreymborg

Many critics ridiculed these lines as an example of "crazy verse" or "shredded prose." Yet it is a fable in miniature, a scrap of philosophy in foolscap. It says, quite simply, that there are days when we loaf, "tail-wise from a limb," that there are hours when we crave food more than anything else, that there is a dreaming poet "quizzing the sky" in each of us, that there are times when we pursue others in love and war — in short that we are all many "monkeys" in one. Did you have difficulty seeing the point of this poem? Did it appeal to your sense of humor? In what way can it be called a fable? Did it fail to make any impression? What can be said in favor of writing it in this manner? What can be said against it?

Read poems in free verse by the following authors:

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--------|------------------|--------|
| Edgar Lee Masters | p. 85 | Stephen Crane | p. 87 |
| Amy Lowell | p. 103 | Carl Sandburg | p. 125 |
| James Oppenheim | p. 150 | Alfred Kreymborg | p. 154 |
| John Gould Fletcher | p. 186 | H. D. | p. 191 |
| Jean Starr Untermeyer | p. 194 | Robinson Jeffers | p. 201 |
| Richard Aldington | p. 408 | Stephen Spender | p. 423 |

Could any of the above poems have been better said in (a) prose? (b) in strictly measured verse? As a test, try to find a similar thought which has been better expressed in (a) prose (b) regular stanzas.

Re-read Oppenheim's "The Slave" (p. 150) and Henley's "Margaritae Sorori" (p. 293). What is the compelling thought in each? Each poem is built on a simple idea: the first concerns the spirit of freedom, the second celebrates peace and security. Try to put either idea into rhymed verse. By doing this, what have you gained? What has been lost?

"Lake Song" (p. 196) is an intensely musical lyrical though there is no rhyme. What makes it so fluent? Point out the syllables which suggest movement and softness. Observe that the *lapping*

of lake water is expressed by the consonants *l*, *p*, and *w*. What other poetic devices are used to increase the liquid effect?

Find other examples of free verse in this volume. Which has the most immediate effect upon you? Which seems to have the greatest strength and staying power? Explain your choice.

20. FROM FRANCE: THE RONDEAU

Many years ago certain "fixed" forms of poetry were imported from France. The English poets adapted these patterns and they have been incorporated into our own literature. Of these forms, all of which are technically precise, two of the shortest as well as the most popular are the rondeau and the triolet.

The rondeau has thirteen lines and only two rhymes — all the lines, except the repeated ones, are of eight syllables. The repeated lines (the "refrain") are made of the first *half* of the first line. Because of its structure, the rondeau is usually pert and artificial. But, although most rondeaus have cleverness and charm rather than deep feeling, a few contain real emotion. Such are the examples in this volume:

"What is to Come" by W. E. Henley, p. 294

"In After Days" by Austin Dobson, p. 285

"In Flanders Fields" by John McCrae, p. 345

These rondeaus are serious in purpose, not merely graceful. Which is the most moving? Notice the accumulation of detail in "In Flanders Fields." Can you trace the gathering power of this short poem? Comparing the three poems, can you discover what they have in common as a *form*? Does the refrain stand out? How is this accomplished? Does it become more monotonous or does it make the meaning more emphatic?

Sometimes the first and last phrases of the rondeau are turned so as to make a pun. Notice how the following poem is given a humorous and unexpected twist by the manipulation of the refrain.

THE RITES OF LOVE

You bid me write, and so this string
Of aimless rhymes at last takes wing.

Alas, impermanent and slight,

They bare no beauty, shed no light,
Having no poignance, point, or sting.

And yet, somehow, they seem to sing
 With a forgotten carolling.
 Perhaps it is because tonight
 You bid me write.

Now I could sing of Wagner's *Ring*,
 Of *Shoes* and *Ships* and even *Spring*,
 Of *Summer's Blessing*, *Winter's Blight*,
 Of *Shakespeare*, *Home*, or *Hearts Contrite*.
 What? Could I sing of anything
 You bid me? Right.

Louis Untermeyer

If you are interested in further study of the rondeau and triolet you might consult *The Forms of Poetry: A Dictionary of Verse* by Louis Untermeyer and, for a comprehensive account of the French forms, *Lyric Forms from France* by Helen Louise Cohen.

21. ANOTHER FRENCH FORM: THE TRIOLET

The triolet is the simplest and shortest of the French forms. Charming to read and easy to write, it has long been a favorite. It is a single stanza of eight lines — three of which are repeated — and only two rhymes. The first, fourth, and seventh lines are exactly the same; the eighth line repeats the second. The following triolet is characteristic of the spirit as well as the structure:

A MATTER OF ACCENT

"I love you, my lord!"
 Was all that she said —
 What a dissonant chord:
 "I love you, my lord!"
 Ah! how I abhorred
 That sarcastic maid!
 "I love you? . . . My Lord!"
 Was all that she said,

Paul T. Gilbert

The short lines and brief compass prevent the triolet from being profound. Yet, though the triolet is generally nimble and tricky, a few triolets have been written which are in the class of serious poetry.

Read "Spring Bluets" by Sara Teasdale (p. 161). Notice how

the repetitions stress the central idea. This would be wearisome in a longer poem, but it is pleasant, if a little persistent, in so short a verse. Compare these lines with Ryskind's lines on page 453 and with the following triolet by a poet (see p. 393) who is noted for his serious and even tragic work.

SUMMER TWILIGHT

When the summer twilight falls,
To the gate of dreams I go;
Safe beyond these viewless walls,
When the summer twilight falls,
There alone my heart recalls
All that once was heaven. And so,
When the summer twilight falls,
To the gate of dreams I go.

Siegfried Sassoon

What relation have these two poems? What relation have they to the rondeaus quoted in the preceding section? Read "Song" by Adelaide Crapsey on page 251 of the revised and enlarged *Modern American Poetry*. At first glance this looks like a lyric of two verses, but it is actually a triolet. What has the poet gained or lost by using this form?

22. DEPTH AND DIGNITY: THE SONNET

Of all forms of poetry the sonnet has proved most effective in expressing a *single idea or emotion in compact dignified form*. Because of its concentration the sonnet has not only dignity but solidity and depth.

Compare any of the serious rondeaus with the "Sonnet" by Rupert Brooke (p. 398). Notice the difference in depth and the power of the images. The very opening of Brooke's poem fascinates us with its combination of picture and emotion. Here is the expression of intense love even beyond death; we see the dark shadow, feel the loneliness of the "last land" and the lover waiting patiently. A ghostly wind blows from the other world, but he is not afraid. He beholds, as a vision, the loved one, "a broad-browed and smiling dream," bringing light into the darkness, still beautiful and courageous, even amused, "among the ancient

dead." Do you feel the blending of devotion and humor, of the earthly and the ghostly?

Have you sensed the *form* of this poem? The sonnet, like the rondeau, is limited in shape and size. Sometimes it is divided into two parts — an "octave" (eight lines) and a "sestet" (six lines) — sometimes it is a fourteen-line unit without a break. Sometimes there are only four rhymes; sometimes there are as many as seven. Every sonnet, however, is *fourteen* lines long. In England Shakespeare was the first to develop the sonnet, originally an Italian form, into a strong but flexible medium. Modern poets use the Shakespearian model and also the pattern originated by the Italian Petrarch, as well as variations of both.

Note the structure and arrangement of rhymes in the following two sonnets. The first is in the Shakespearian form, the second is in the Petrarchan form.

| | |
|--|---|
| Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? | a |
| Thou art more lovely and more temperate: | b |
| Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, | a |
| And summer's lease hath all too short a date; | b |
| Sometimes too hot the eye of heaven shines, | c |
| And often is his gold complexion dimmed; | d |
| And every fair from fair sometime declines, | c |
| By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimmed. | d |

| | |
|---|---|
| But thy eternal summer shall not fade | e |
| Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest; | f |
| Nor shall Death brag thou wanderest in his shade, | e |
| When in eternal lines to time thou growest — | f |
| So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see, | g |
| So long lives this, and this gives life to thee. | g |

William Shakespeare

| | |
|---|---|
| The irresponsive silence of the land, | a |
| The irresponsive sounding of the sea, | b |
| Speak both one message of one sense to me: | b |
| Aloof, aloof, we stand aloof. So stand | a |
| Thou too aloof, bound with the flawless band | a |
| Of inner solitude; we bind not thee; | b |
| But who from thy self-chain shall set thee free? | b |
| What heart shall touch thy heart? What hand thy hand? | a |
| And I am sometimes proud and sometimes meek, | c |
| And sometimes I remember days of old | d |

| | |
|---|---|
| When fellowship seemed not so far to seek, | c |
| And all the world and I seemed much less cold, | d |
| And at the rainbow's foot lay surely gold, | d |
| And hope felt strong, and life itself not weak. | c |

Christina Rossetti

Read:

- "Tears" by Lizette W. Reese, p. 65
- "Spicewood" by Lizette W. Reese, p. 66
- "Cliff Klingenhagen" by E. A. Robinson, p. 82
- "Calvary" by E. A. Robinson, p. 83
- "Puritan Sonnet" by Elinor Wylie, p. 168
- "A Virginal" by Ezra Pound, p. 170
- "Pity Me Not" by Edna St. Vincent Millay, p. 228
- "The End of the World" by Archibald MacLeish, p. 232
- "The Book of How" by Merrill Moore, p. 254
- "Remember Me" by Christina Rossetti, p. 275
- "Come Back to Me" by Christina Rossetti, p. 276
- "To One in Bedlam" by Ernest Dowson, p. 326
- "Peace" by Walter de la Mare, p. 350
- "Dreamers" by Siegfried Sassoon, p. 394
- "The Soldier" by Rupert Brooke, p. 401
- "Two Sonnets" by C. H. Sorley, p. 414

Select two sonnets from the above list which are (a) similar in form; (b) different in form. What is the chief effect of each? Which of those you have read seems most skilfully constructed? Which is closest to a natural utterance and the least like a formal composition? Point out other sonnets in this volume.

Apart from consideration of the form, which sonnet says most to you because of its (a) vigor of language? (b) beauty of picture? (c) depth of thought? Which would you remember longest for its own sake?

Read the sonnets by Merrill Moore on pages 253-254. In what way do they differ from most of the sonnets quoted? One critic has said that Moore's sonnets save the form from its "rigid formality." Do you agree with this opinion or do you think the poet has lost the dignity of the design? Another critic claims that the very departures from the traditional pattern help create an "American" type of sonnet as recognizable as Shakespeare's is English and Petrarch's is Italian. Is this possible, and if so how does Moore accomplish it?

It is interesting to compare the sonnets of our own day with those of the past. There are many sonnet anthologies in existence,

and practically every compilation of English poetry contains a number of famous sonnets. Among those which have become classics are the following, included in *The Oxford Book of English Verse* and *The Golden Treasury*:

- | | |
|---|--|
| Sonnets i, ii, iii, viii, ix, xi, xvi, xx by William Shakespeare | "The Parting" by Michael Drayton |
| "On his Blindness" by John Milton | "Death, be not Proud" by John Donne |
| "Two Sonnets on the Sonnet" by William Wordsworth | "How soon hath Time" by John Milton |
| "England, 1802" by William Wordsworth | "Upon Westminster Bridge" by William Wordsworth |
| "Ozymandias" by P. B. Shelley | "Evening on Calais Beach" by William Wordsworth |
| "When I Have Fears" by John Keats | "To Sleep" by John Keats |
| "Sonnets from the Portuguese" by Elizabeth Barrett Brown- ing | "Last Sonnet" by John Keats |
| "Shakespeare" by Matthew Arnold | "Nature" by H. W. Longfellow |
| | "Lucifer in Starlight" by George Meredith |
| | "Silence" by Thomas Hood |

23. A MAN AND A LEGEND: ABRAHAM LINCOLN

English literature is full of poems and stories celebrating the national heroes. Some of these, like Richard the Lion-Hearted, Drake, and Nelson, are real; others, like King Arthur, Tristram, and Robin Hood, are mythical. America has not had enough time or tradition to build up great national myths; yet, young though it is, legends have already grown up about real figures such as George Washington, Daniel Boone, Davy Crockett, Johnny Appleseed, and Buffalo Bill, as well as such imaginary characters as Paul Bunyan, John Henry, and Rip Van Winkle. The Benéts have incorporated many verses about these and other characters in *A Book of Americans*.

No character in American history has been interpreted so often and so variously as Abraham Lincoln. Biographies have been written about him by statesmen, lawyers, politicians, and poets — Carl Sandburg's monumental volumes are considered as important as his own poetry. This book includes several poems inspired by the life and character of "the great liberator."

"Lincoln, the Man of the People" by Edwin Markham, p. 63

"The Master" by E. A. Robinson, p. 79

"Anne Rutledge" by Edgar Lee Masters, p. 86

"A Farmer Remembers Lincoln" by Witter Bynner, p. 148

"The Lincoln Child" by James Oppenheim, p. 151

"Lincoln" by John Gould Fletcher, p. 188

"Nancy Hanks" by Stephen Vincent Benét, p. 240

What images in the first poem suggest certain traits in Lincoln? Does the comparison to a tree symbolize these or other qualities? Compare the ending of this poem with the beginning of Fletcher's "Lincoln." What similarities can you find? Which is the more powerful picture? Does the expression seem more impressive in Markham's blank verse or Fletcher's free verse? Which metaphor in each poem is the most memorable?

Robinson's "The Master" is supposed to be spoken by one of Lincoln's contemporaries who, when Lincoln was struggling toward a great career, jeered at the "backwoods upstart." Now, having lived to regret his harsh estimate, the patrician speaker renders his tribute. Notice how cautious and reserved the tone of this poem is compared to the lines by Markham and Fletcher. The utterance is clipped, elegant, and epigrammatic. Each verse expresses much in a little space. Do you understand the meaning of "inept Icarian wings"? Look up the Greek story of Icarus, who flew too high and ventured too near the sun. What is a Titan? How is the word applied to Lincoln? In what way was he "laconic — and Olympian"?

"Anne Rutledge" is not a portrait of Lincoln, yet Lincoln becomes the theme of the poem. How? Do you know the story of Anne Rutledge, Lincoln's sweetheart, whom he never married? Is this poem more symbolic than realistic? What is the ghost of Anne Rutledge trying to say?

Benét's "Nancy Hanks" is something like Masters' "Anne Rutledge" for it is not a direct portrait of Lincoln, but a portrait of one who was related to him. Tenderness and humor are combined in these verses in a way which must appeal to children as well as adults. Can you explain this? Do you find the poem more pathetic than comic? What has Nancy Hanks in common with all mothers?

How does Bynner's "A Farmer Remembers Lincoln" differ from the others? Point out the differences in attitude as well as tone. Can you find phrases which indicate (a) an intimate mood? (b) the background of the speaker? (c) his relation to Lincoln? What kind of verse would you call this? What form?

Oppenheim's "The Lincoln Child" is another contrast. It is free in form, yet it uses rhyme throughout. Do you find this easier or harder to read than the other poems about Lincoln? Are the lines more matter-of-fact or more exalted? What has it in common with Fletcher's "Lincoln"? What, apart from the form, is its chief difference? Expand the connection between Oppenheim's line "as he grew . . . and *gnarled* his way into a man" and Fletcher's "like a *gaunt, scraggly* pine which . . . begins to grow." Do such phrases present Lincoln physically as well as spiritually? How? Select three or more words which are particularly effective as epithets, saying much in little.

Of the seven poems listed in this section which (a) gives the clearest picture of Lincoln? (b) shows a side of him which you had never suspected? (c) makes you want to read more about Lincoln's life and times?

24. STUDY OF TWO POETS: SANDBURG AND MASEFIELD

The foreword to this volume ends by saying, "The purpose of an anthology must be to rouse and stimulate an interest." Such an interest leads many a reader to study certain individual poets. This requires a little time and some extra reading; but the task is not difficult, and the time spent is doubly rewarding. The method may be outlined as follows:

Choose a poet, or choose two poets whom you may want to compare. First read the part of the preface devoted to him or his background. If he represents some particular tendency or movement, look up the contributions of that "school." Then read the prose paragraphs which precede his poems in this volume. Next read all the poems in this book by this author. Note their outstanding characteristics, their reflection of the poet's personality, and their view of life in general. If you wish to make your report fuller you should read other poems in the author's own volumes, preferably in a one-volume *Selected Poems*. Most publishers issue pamphlets about the life and works of their authors, and they are usually willing to send them to students free of charge.

Suppose you have chosen to study and contrast the work of two contemporary poets: Carl Sandburg, an American, and John Masefield, an Englishman. You will begin with Sandburg. Be-

sides the poems included in this volume, you will read some of his other characteristic work, especially:

| | | |
|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Chicago | Lost | Onion Days |
| Prairie | River Roads | Wilderness |
| Clean Curtains | Aprons of Silence | Losers |
| The Windy City | Omaha | Smoke and Steel |

You will now realize why Sandburg has been called "the laureate of industrial America." His volume *The People, Yes* shows his sympathy with common humanity, a sympathy that also runs through Masfield's work, especially the early poems. Reading the biographical details, you have already discovered that both Sandburg and Masfield struggled with poverty, identified themselves with the workers, and celebrated the "inglorious and unsung." It seems certain that environment has influenced the poets' writings. Besides the poems by Masfield in this volume you should read:

| | | |
|-------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| A Wanderer's Song | C. L. M. | Cargoes |
| On Growing Old | The Choice | The Passing Strange |
| What Am I, Life | Sonnets | The Everlasting Mercy |

You are now ready to write a report on each poet separately or a comparative estimate of the two. You can contrast a series of similarities and differences, such as (a) the American and English idiom, (b) the joy of action and reflection, (c) the portrayals of actual life. Your composition or essay should outline (1) a brief biography of the poet, (2) his outstanding contribution, (3) quotations from what you consider his best poems, (4) an analysis of one or two examples which seem the most revealing, and (5) a conclusion which establishes a relation between the man and his work.

You should feel free to choose your own favorite. Sometimes the lesser poets present problems which are as interesting as those of the more famous writers. In the spirit of adventure the comparative study often yields the richest results. The following "pairs" are merely suggestions toward that end:

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Frost and Kipling | De la Mare and Elinor Wylie |
| MacLeish and Yeats | Christina Rossetti and Emily |
| Edith Sitwell and Edna Millay | Dickinson |
| Lindsay and Chesterton | Hardy and Robinson |

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